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A
DISCOURSE
OF THE
Use of Reason
IN
Matters of Religion:

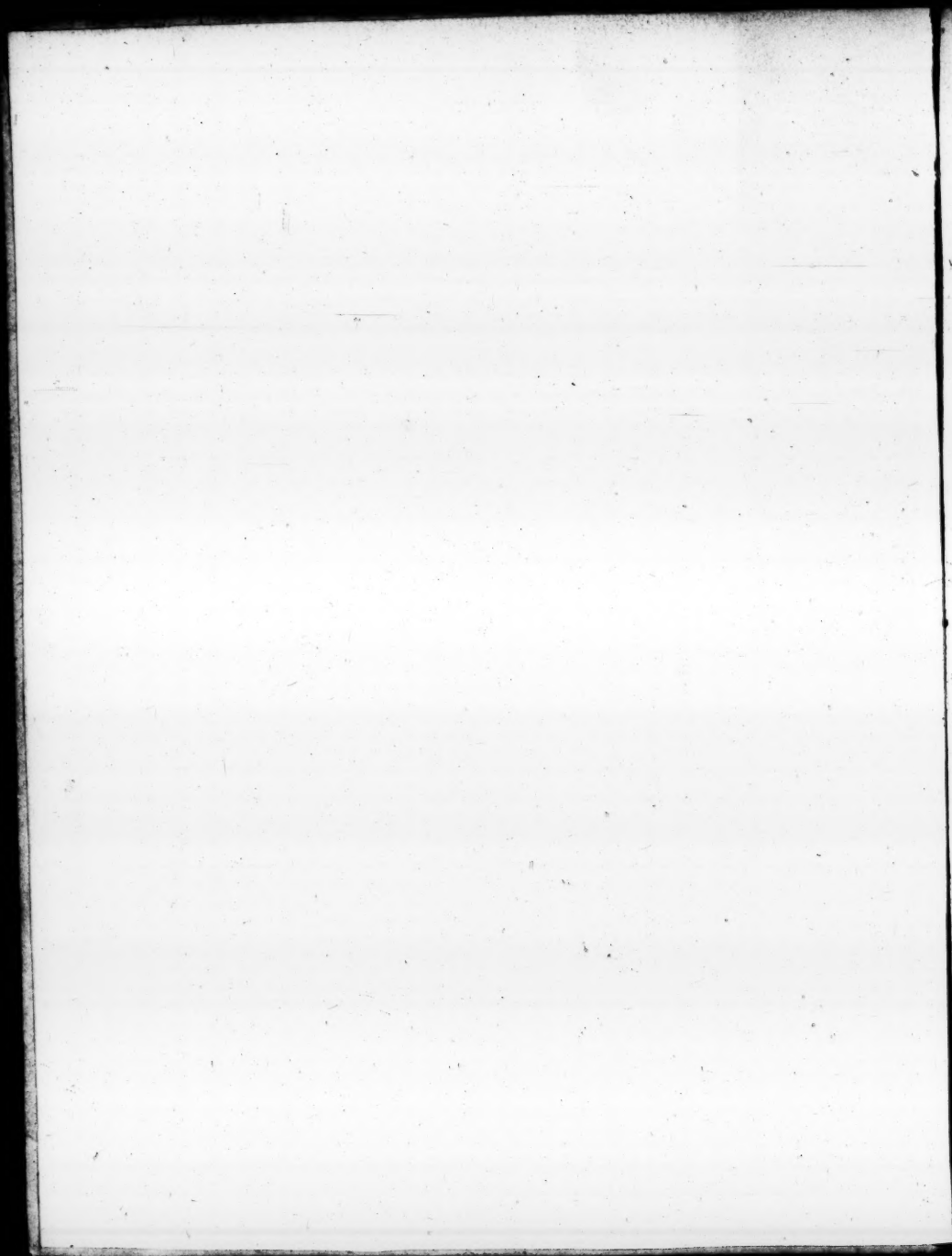
Shewing, That
CHRISTIANITY
Contains nothing Repugnant to
RIGHT REASON;
Against
ENTHUSIASTS and DEISTS.

Written in *Latin* by the
Reverend Dr. RUST, late Lord Bishop
of Dromore in Ireland:

AND
Translated into *English*, with *Annotations* upon it,
By HEN. HALLWELL.

L O N D O N :

Printed by Hen. Hills, Jun for Walter Kettilby at the
Bishop's-Head in St. Paul's Church-yard, 1683.



TO THE

Reverend and profoundly Learned

Dr. Henry More,

Fellow of Cbrist's-Colledge in
Cambridge.

Honoured Sir,

THat I presume to intitule this Discourse, with its affixed Annotations to your Great Name, proceeds from a real sense, that it is but your just due, who have merited so much of the Learned World, and whose Labours and Pains to advance all useful Knowledge have been so indefatigable; more especially in rendring the Christian Doctrine in all its Parts such as it ought to be,

A 2

that

The Epistle Dedicatory.

that is, Rational and Unexceptionable, bringing the Glories both of Greek and Barbarick, and whatever other piece of Ancient Wisdom was ever esteemed, to adorn and beautifie the new Jerusalem: and partly because you were an intimate Friend of the Reverend Author, whose Great Soul could not take up with little and dwindling Conceipts, but strove to enlarge his own Mind with noble and important Truths, and became a Happy Instrument in promoting the same generous Temper in others. And now, Sir, give me leave, among the other Motives which perswaded me to this Address, to add this as none of the least, that I may testifie to the World to be what I really am,

An humble Honourer

of your Virtues,

HEN. HALLYWELL.

The PREFACE to the READER.

READER,

THat I may do right to that Great and Excellent Person the Author of this Discourse I have adventured to publish, and likewise obviate all Cavils and Mistakes which freakish Wits may make upon the Account of giving a Reason of our Faith, it will be needful to suggest something by way of Preface; as

1. That this Discourse is principally level'd (as is intimated by the Reverend Author himself) against Enthusiasts and Deists: The one pretending to immediate Inspiration, and so taking the various Impulses of their own Private Spirits as the sole *Criterium* to know and discern the Will of God, though they be never so extravagant and Contrary to the common Reason of Mankind: And the other pleading only for a Natural Religion in opposition to any Particular Mode or Way of Divine Revelation; And hence though they profess to acknowledge a God and Providence, yet have withal a mean and low esteem of the Scriptures and Christianity, as if the Christian Religi-

The PREFACE.

on were a thing that could not well be Apologized for, nor any fair and rational Account given of it. Wherefore Theism being so opposite to Christian Religion as Christian, and the Natural Current of Enthusiasm falling at last into down-right Atheism, it became necessary to Assert a Modest and Discreet use of Reason in Things of Religion, and to shew that the Christian Religion will bear the strictest and severest Tryal of Right and unprejudic'd Reason.

2^{ly}. That our Learned Author had no Intent or Design to abet or countenance *Capricio's* of such pert persons as think themselves obliged to believe and profess nothing more then they can maintain by their own solitary Reason applying it self to the Scriptures. Which Presumption what strange work it hath made in the World is evident from the *Sacini*ans and other Sectarists, who upon this very Ground are really bewildred in their Speculations of Things, and under Pretence of Reason have obtruded their own Fancies upon the World, and vented such crude and indigested Notions as are not only inconsistent with the clear Current of Scripture, but contrary to the sense of the best and purest Antiquity.

Wherefore (3^{ly}.) according to the intention

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tion and meaning of the Author in this Discourse, the Authority of the Primitive Church before the Times of Apostasie, and of Reformed Churches in such Things wherein they generally agree with the Primitive times wherein the Church was Symmetral, is to be taken in as one solid Reason of our Faith and Belief. For the Spirit of Propheſie, which is the Testimony of Jeſus, having ſo clearly predicted the Times of the Apoſtaſie of the Church, it is manifeſt that the Authority and Profeſſion of the Ancient Church while it was Symmetral and Apoſtolicall ought to be had in the greateſt Eſteem and Veneration, and ſtand as a light whereby to ſteer ſafe from thoſe dangerous Rocks of Errors upon which they that have neglected this and ventured wholly to their own Reason have ſplit themſelves. Nor is the Authority of our own Church to be leſs regarded; for the being with the reſt of Reformed Chriſtendom ſo plainly indigited and pointed at by the Riſing of the Witneſſes in that Divine Book of the *Apocalypſe*, immediately upon which follows that joyful Acclamation in Heaven, *The Kingdoms of this World are become the Kingdoms of our Lord and his Chriſt*, it cannot be but a mighty Confirmation and ſtrengthening to any
Man's

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Man's Faith to see so clear a Testimony and Approbation of that Church whercof he is a Member given by the Spirit of Propheſie, that it is really emerged and riſen into the ſtate and condition of the Church when it was Symmetrall and Apoſtolicall. And this will further appear to be of huge Conſequence to private men, and of but mean Capacity in the diſcuſſing of Things. For they being neither Philoſophers, nor guiding themſelves by that *Synofura* of the Unapoſtatized Church, nor of our own Church reformed into the Condition of the Church while it continu'd Symmetrall, if they be pert and confident, or follow ſuch pert & confident Guides into what Errors may they not run! Wherefore here ſuch of the Populacy will find a ſolid and ſure Rule for their ſafe conduct and guidance in rendring an Account or Reaſon of their Faith. Theſe things I have hinted as well to prevent all ſiniſter Interpretations of the Senſe of that Pious and Learned Prelate now with God, as to free my ſelf from all Suſpicion in my *Annotations* of ſetting up Private Reaſon againſt the Authority of the Ancient and Unapoſtatized Church, or our own Church ſo excellently well temper'd and reformed according to the Primitive Pattern. *H. H. T O*

1 PET. 3. 15.

ἑτοιμαί δε αἰς πᾶς ἀπολογῆαν παντὶ τῷ αἰτῶντι ὑμᾶς
 λόγον ὡς ἰδ' ἐν ὑμῶν ἐλπίδος.

Non me pudet Evangelii Christi, dixit ille
 magnus Apostolus, Gamaliele Præceptore
 gaudens, omni tum Judaicâ tum Græcâ
 Doctrinâ instructissimus; Adeoque Reli-
 gione Christianâ undique oppressâ & despiciatui habitâ,
 Judæis scandalo, Græcis ludibrio, nihilominus spretâ
 ignominiâ, cruce contemptâ, Paratus sum (inquit)
 Vobis qui Romæ estis, apud egregios Urbis istius, non
 Armorum magis quàm Artium Magistrâ, Philosophos
 & Oratores, Evangelium prædicare. Quippe etiam si
 non defuere sibi met de suâ sapientiâ magnificè plau-
 dentes, cæcitatibus interea & Ignorantiæ tenebris obdu-
 cti, qui Doctrinam Evangelicam stultitiæ insimulant
 & deridendam exhibent: Veruntamen si quis, seposito
 omni inordinato affectu & præjudicatâ Opinione, rem
 ut decet, sincero & incorrupto Judicio æstimaverit,
 compertum habebit Religionem Christianam Poten-
 tiam esse & sapientiam Dei, rationi apprimè concinen-
 tem, omni fide Dignissimam.

Quemadmodum verò nobis Exemplo prævit Insig-
 nis ille Doctor Gentium, ita pariter Apostolus Cir-
 cumcisionis verbis modò lectis hortatur, *Parati semper*
sitis ad satisfactionem omni poscenti vos Rationem de
eâ quæ in vobis est spe: i. e. Parati estote causam
reddere cur sitis Christiani: Atque in hanc sententiam

VOX

' vox *λογίας* sæpius occurrit in Actis & Scriptis
 ' Paulinis : *Act.* 22. 1. *Phil.* 1. 7. & 17. 2 *Tim.*
 ' 4. 16. Per *ἐλπίδα* intelligo Doctrinam Evangeli-
 ' cam, quo sensu idem Vocabulum usurpatum legimus,
 ' *Act.* 26. 7.

In re Religionis intervenit usus Rationis.

Ita comparata est Religio Christiana ut de ea
Ratio reddi possit.

Paratum esse oportet fidei suæ rationem reponere
quisquis Evangelio nomen dederit.

' Ea sunt quæ ex hoc loco observanda veniunt. In
 ' Religione eligendâ non vacare prorsus Rationem, &
 ' ejusmodi esse Religionem Christianam, quæ nihil con-
 ' tineat Rectæ Rationi adversum, contra Enthusiastas
 ' & Deistas præsentî disquisitione demonstrandum in
 ' me recipio.

' Per Rationem non Intelligo Superbiæ, Avaritiæ,
 ' Cupidinis, Iræ aut alterius cujuslibet pravi affectûs
 ' dictamina : Hæc nimirum ea est Carnis sapientia, Deo
 ' nec minus veræ Rationi inimica : Hi sunt illi *λογισμοί*
 ' qui evertendi sunt, 2 *Cor.* 10. 4, 5. Hoc illud *νόημα* quod
 ' in Captivitatem redigendum est in obedientiam Chri-
 ' sti; nimirum Ratiocinationes & discursus isti qui Car-
 ' ni & Cupiditatibus nostris inserviunt. Hic est ille
 ' *ψυχὴς ἀνθρώπου* qui non capit ea quæ sunt spiritûs Dei;
 ' stultitia enim ipsi sunt, *ὅτι ἡ δύναμις γινώσκει, ὅτι πνευματικῶς ἀνα-
 ' κρίνεται.* Is enim est homo Animalis qui sensu & Appe-
 ' titu ducitur. *Ψυχὴ* enim (ut satis nôrunt qui veterum
 ' scripta vel parum delibârunt) est ea Animæ facultas
 ' quæ Corpori adaptatur. Qui verò talis est spiritui
 ' Dei & Doctrinæ Evangelicæ perpetuò adversatur; &
 ' quæ inibi dicta sunt *mera stultitia* videntur, *neque*
 ' *ea serie potest, quia spiritualiter, h. e. mente humili,*

1 *Cor.* 2. 14.

' com-

‘ compositis affectibus, sereno lumine, puro, internôq;
 ‘ sensu *discernuntur*.

‘ Hæc est illa sapientia superbiâ & fastu tumida, apud
 ‘ quam Verbum Crucis pro stultitiâ habetur. Obscura
 ‘ enim Christi Vita & probrosa Mors ridiculo semper 1 Cor. 1. 18.
 ‘ erat Animo (ut videtur) sublimioribus Notionibus
 ‘ elato; Hæc denique est illa *σοφία τοῦ κόσμου τέτυ, καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων τοῦ αἰῶνος τέτυ*, pravis affectibus aut vanâ scientiæ
 ‘ opinione inebriatorum: Quam tamen Deus & quilibet
 ‘ vir sapiens summam reputat stultitiam. Hujus
 ‘ modi *λογισμοὶ* & Ratiocinationes & Sapientia non sunt
 ‘ rectæ Rationis fœtus, sed mentis Cupiditatibus occæ-
 ‘ cata fallaciæ & Paralogismi.

‘ Per rectam itaque Rationem intelligo facultatem
 ‘ Animæ humanæ insitam, quâ dignoscat rationes, mu-
 ‘ tuasque affectiones rerum, unumque ex alio arguit &
 ‘ concludit. Atque Rationi sic Intellectu aïo Religio-
 ‘ nem Christianam non adversari.

‘ Duo sunt qui huc pertinent usitati loquendi modi;
 ‘ Videlicet aliquid posse esse vel supra vel contra Ra-
 ‘ tionem.

‘ At verò ut quod res est dicamus, quicquid nobis vel
 ‘ credendum proponitur ne quidem supra Rationem
 ‘ esse debet, ni verba ista in eam sententiam accipienda
 ‘ sint, quod sit altius & à sensu communi remotius
 ‘ quàm ut ab Intellectu adinveniri possit. Equidem
 ‘ Articuli quidam Fidei dici possunt esse supra Rationem
 ‘ quoad rei credendæ modos quosdam non revelatos:
 ‘ Ita v. g. superat vim Rationis nosse exactè modum
 ‘ Resurrectionis & Glorificationis nostræ, aut quænam
 ‘ illæ sint futuri seculi Voluptates & Gaudia, aut quo-
 ‘ modo Divinæ Hypostases sint Unus Deus; aut Divina
 ‘ & Humana natura sint Unus Christus: sed de his rebus
 ‘ neque expressa est revelatio nec explicita requiritur
 ‘ fides: Et hæc obscuritas non parum consert ad

‘ Reve-

Reverentiam conciliandam Christianæ Religioni,
 At nihil est quod explicitè credendum proponitur
 quod Rationis Captum, ita ut de eo ne conceptus
 quidem formari possit, excedat. Nam fides consistit in
 Assensu; Assensus sequitur Judicium; Judicium nullum
 esse potest de re ignota & non intellecta. Ergo quod
 omnem Intelligentiam excedit, omnem etiam excedit
 fidem. Et qui sibi persuadere conatur quod credat,
 rem non Intellectam, nescit quid credit, sed vocabulis
 quibusdam aptè dispositis & grande quiddam sonanti-
 bus, quibus tamen nullus in mente responderi Con-
 ceptus, sibi met miserè imponit, dùmque Mysterio
 cuidam non Intellecto fidem adhibere somniat, meras
 consecratur Verborum Umbras, quibus velis subductis,
 fides sua sensusque omnis evanescit.

Religionem verò Christianam nihil continere,
 rectæ Rationi repugnans, simulque usum intervenire
 Rationis in Religionis negotio sequentibus Argumen-
 tis probatum dabo.

I. Primo, Deum quicquam credendum proponere,
 quod rectæ Rationi contradicat, aliquid ex his quatuor
 Absurdis (nec cogitanti mihi occurrit quintum) ne-
 cessario infert, aut Deum posse decipi, aut posse deci-
 pere, aut Rationes & Affectiones rerum non esse æter-
 nas & Immutabiles; aut denique facultates humanas,
 esse errori obnoxias, cum maxime claram & distinctam,
 habent de objectis suis perceptionem. Horum Primum
 & secundum repugnant Notioni & Idæ quam de Deo
 mentibus nostris concepimus.

Tertium quod attinet, est quidem non Nemo qui
 Rationes Rerum contingentes itardit & ad Arbitrium
 Mutabiles, Blasphemiamque, Mendacium, Perju-
 rium, ipsumque adeo Divinæ Majestatis odium posse
 subire rationem Virtutum & cultus Deo grati. At
 Deus bone! quam temeraria quam detestanda Dog-
 mata!

'mata ! aut æterno silentio obruenda aut non sine hor-
 'rore nominanda. Percurre Vetera Concilia, nullam
 'invenies hæresin damnandam prius, aut omni magis
 'dignam Anathemate. Ipsius Inferni Abyssus si pan-
 'derentur Viscera, nihil evomere possunt magis abomi-
 'nandum, aut blasphemum magis. Enimverò sapien-
 'tiâ, Immutabilitate, Bonitate reliquisque quas ei attri-
 'buimus perfectionibus Deum spoliât ; Omnis Discursûs
 'Principia & Fundamenta evertit ; Omnia etiam Con-
 'tradictoria probabilia reddit ; Omnem in Promissis
 'Divinis fiduciam destruit ; Omnemque spem & expe-
 'ctationem futuræ felicitatis profligat : quas omnes
 'Consequentias ex hoc Principio naturaliter oriri aliàs
 'probavimus, & cuilibet attentius consideranti facilè
 'patebit.

'Quartum verò, Quod Deus nobis ejusmodi infereret
 'facultates quæ tum falsæ esse possint, cum clarissimè
 '& distinctissimè objecta sua pereipiant, adversatur
 'Bonitati & Veracitati Divinæ. Præterea fieri non
 'potest ut Deus quicquam credendum revelet, nisi hoc
 'prius jacto fundamento, facultatibus nostris adhiben-
 'dam esse fidem. Nihil enim nobis à Deo proponi
 'potest nisi sit conforme alicui facultati : At si facultas
 'ista cum maximè clarè & distinctè percipit Objectum
 'suum, non est à Deceptione immunis, quomodo nobis
 'innotescet errorem hunc non cadere in præsens id quod-
 'cunque sit negotium, præsertim si Ratio facultatum
 'nostrarum Princeps clarè & distinctè intelligat illud
 'esse falsum quod nobis offertur sub specie Divinæ Re-
 'velationis ? Hæc enim Revelatio accipienda est aut ab
 'Auditu aut alio aliquo sensu externo, aut denique ab
 'internâ Imaginatione. At num non potiori jure exi-
 'stimanda erit illusio si adversetur claræ & evidenti
 'Rationi, quàm quod Ratio nostra quæ in Ducem &

' Directricem à Deo collata est deciperetur in maximè
 ' claro & distincto Rerum Conceptu? Nam si abjicia-
 ' mus Rationem, nulla alia facultas ductrix reliqua est
 ' præter sensum Externum ejusque inclinationes, &
 ' stultam levemque Phantasiam infinitis Deceptionibus
 ' obnoxiam. Quapropter Ratione valere jussâ, annon
 ' nosmet exponimus illusioni cujuslibet spiritûs circula-
 ' torii qui præstigiis suis Divinam simulaverit Virtutem?
 ' Quamobrem, si *Moses* legem suam constituit tan-
 ' quam lapidem lydium quo probaretur quicumque se
 ' jactitaret Prophetam, monens populum suum, quod si
 ' quis signa aut miracula ederet non tamen ei auscultan-
 ' dum esse, si quid doceret legi isti adversum quam ipsi
 ' à Deo tradiderat: An non nos pariter decet ad Legem
 ' Naturæ & Rectæ Rationis quæ stylo Adamantino
 ' mentibus nostris inscripta est tanquam ad Normam &
 ' Regulam minimè fallacem revocare omnes quicumque
 ' Divinam Autoritatem obtenderint? (Obiter moneo
 ' sermonem esse de Ratione Incorruptâ, malis affectibus
 ' liberâ & spiritûs sancti lumine collustratâ) Hujus au-
 ' tem Ducis auspicio destituti, fieri potest ut confidentes
 ' quidem, & obstinatè persuasi, at nullatenus certi simus
 ' nos unquam viâ rectâ incedere. Nec refert dixisse
 ' Rationem posse quidem judicium ferre in rebus huma-
 ' nis, nequaquam tamen in Divinis. Et si enim id verum
 ' sit de Ratione malis Passionibus occæcata, & omnino
 ' locum teneat in iis rebus quæ objecta sunt potius gustûs
 ' & sensûs interni quàm Rationis; At secus se res habet
 ' ubi solius Intellectûs assensus requiritur. Quicquid
 ' enim exhibetur explicitè credendum, de eo primùm
 ' formandus est conceptus: de quocunque autem con-
 ' ceptum formamus, Ratio aut detegit terminorum qui-
 ' bus constat Harmoniam, reique ipsius cum communi
 ' aliquâ Notione consensum; atque ideo pronunciat
 ' eam

'eam esse veram: autprehendit Terminos esse con-
 'tradictorios & repugnantes, remque innato alicui Prin-
 'cipio è Diametro oppositam, atque ita iudicat eam esse
 'falsam: Aut cernit Terminos esse partim concordēs,
 'partim Diffōnos, aut nullam omnino ad invicem Rela-
 'tionem habere: atque hinc affirmat rem aut proba-
 'bilem aut possibilem. Et si quod ingens Miraculum
 'edatur ad confirmandam alteram sive probabilitatis
 'sive possibilitatis partem, tum demum Ratio calculum
 'suum adjiciet, fidem esse adhibendam. V. g. Finga-
 'mus quod jam factum est, quendam Maria ac Terras
 'ambientem, huic negotio intentum ut doceat atque
 'instruat humanum Genus in suo erga Deum atque
 'homines officio, æternam Beatitudinem sub conditione
 'obedientiæ pollicentem, ipso interim degente vitam
 'inoffensam atque innocentissimam; & simul seipsum
 'prædicante tanquam Legislatorem à Deo missum, &
 'quod omnis Potestas cum in Terris tum etiam in Cœlis
 'ei delata sit, & quod ipsius interventu omnes preces &
 'gratiarum actiones sunt Deo offerendæ: Nihil hîc ha-
 'betur contradictorium, aut Naturæ Principiis repug-
 'nans. Facîle tamen suspicatur Ratio subesse aliquam
 'superbiam & Divini Nominis & cultus affectationem.
 'At verò si quod nudè spectatum possibile videtur, fue-
 'rit Divinâ Potentiâ consignatum, hujus Doctrinæ Au-
 'thore hujusmodi miracula edente, qualia nemo hæte-
 'nus vidit Mortalium, Ratio extemplò in eam senten-
 'tiam ibit, rem esse admodum credibilem: Atqui si
 'hic homo docuisset aliquid Rectæ Rationis Dictamini
 'adversum, si introduxisset Doctrinam impiam & pro-
 'fanam, aut effrænem vivendi licentiam, & iisdem
 'miraculis fidem extorquere satagisset, se à Deo missum
 'ut hujusmodi nobis persuaderet, Ratio nostra sugges-
 'sisset ilicò fuisse eum Impostorem & Deceptorem:

quoniam nihil Legi Naturæ aut Rectæ Rationi contra-
 rium à Deo aut quoquam Divinam Autoritatem ob-
 tinente promulgari potest. Et licet urgeri possit esse
 contra Veracitatem Divinam, testimonium præbere
 Mendacio, & proinde quicquid innititur Miraculorum
 fide (cùm hæc fere unica sint voluntatis Dei externa in-
 dicia) necesse videri à Deo originem suam deducat,
 nihilominus quia nequeo certò scire, num non hæc
 fiant in tentationem, aut alium aliquem finem, mihi
 quidem ignotum, infinitæ tamen sapientiæ consenta-
 neum, potius diffiderem huic Ratiocinationi, quàm hoc
 Argumento motus, quicquam admitterem tanquam
 cœlitus profectum, quod Naturæ Principiis evidenter
 adversatur.

2. Secundum Argumentum. Ita comparata est Ho-
 minis Natura, ut omnino fieri non possit, ut rei alicui
 Assensum præberet absque ductu Rationis. Quod ut
 clarius pateat mutuanda sunt quædam præsentī Insti-
 tuto accommodata à magno illo Barone insignis istius
 libelli de veritate Authore. Ex illius itaque sententiâ
 quatuor sunt Facultates quibus in rerum Notitiam per-
 venimus: Instinctus Naturalis, sive Facultas Notionum
 communium Discretrix; Sensus Internus, Sensus Exter-
 nus & Discursus.

De quibus magnum illud Effatum, pluris certè facien-
 dum quàm integra alia. Volumina de Animâ ejusque
 Facultatibus conscripta; *Quod neque per instinctum na-
 turalem, sensum internum, sensum externum, neque discursu
 innotescit, tanquam verum proprie dictum, nullo pa-
 cto probari potest.* At verò cùm hæc quatuor sint fa-
 cultates, & quicquid credendum proponitur harum
 alicui conforme esse necesse sit, dicat Ratio Instinctui
 Naturali, Sensui Interno, Sensui Externo, singulis rite
 dispositis adhibendam esse fidem. Ipsa verò (quod
 ejus

' ejus est munus) prædictis facultatibus in auxilium vo-
 ' catis, principiis primis & suâ luce clavis subnixâ, advocat
 ' discursus, conclusiones deducit. Naturali Instinctui
 ' semper præbenda est fides: sensus cum externus tum
 ' internus aliquando falli potest; & proinde aliquando
 ' credendus est, aliquando non item; atque penes solam
 ' rationem est hujus discriminis judicium. Nulla enim
 ' alia facultas reliqua est cui hoc muneris deferatur;
 ' Ergo nulli rei assentiri potest mens humana quin faciem
 ' præferre debeat Recta Ratio, vel saltem aliqua ejus
 ' Umbra. Ergo fieri non potest ut Religio Christiana,
 ' quæ nobis credenda proponitur, assensum cogat contra
 ' nitente Rectâ Ratione.

' At dum respiro paulisper, Enthusias audio iteratis
 ' vicibus spiritum oggerentes; & nemo fere est quin
 ' spiritum intus testante obtenderit, ne ei minùs quàm
 ' reliquis Deus favere videatur. Si quærat unde digno-
 ' fiant spiritus testimonium, respondent, perinde ac solis
 ' splendorem, ex proprio lumine. Sed instamus porro,
 ' Testimonium quod spiritus sibimet ipsi perhibet, estne
 ' valida & obstinata persuasio, aut exultatio & ecstasis
 ' gaudii, aut zelus quidam sive fervor animi, an denique
 ' Dignitatis & Excellentiae earum rerum quæ revelan-
 ' tur, clara & sapida persuasio? Postremum si dicatur,
 ' non abhorret à modo dictis. Reliqua verò Capita quod
 ' attinet, infinitus penè est eorum numerus qui se Vitrum,
 ' Butyrum, Canem, Felem, Regem, Imperatorem, Pa-
 ' pam, Paracletum, Messiam, ultimum maximùmque
 ' Prophetam, vivorum & mortuorum Judicem, aut de-
 ' nique Deum ipsum haud leviori fundamento, pertina-
 ' citer asseverârunt. Quorum plerosque præter modum
 ' gaudio perfosos, & Divino (ut videbatur) fervore ac-
 ' censos legimus. Quæ tamen omnia (tam longè abe-
 ' rant ab afflatu Divini Spiritûs) Maniæ erant & Me-
 ' lancholiæ

‘ lancholiæ symptomata : neque originem suam debebant
 ‘ nobiliori principio, quam sanguini & spiritibus tur-
 ‘ batis, & quæ præ cæteris Numen aliquod ostentare vi-
 ‘ detur, atræ bili. Ea quippe, ut nos docet Aristoteles,
 ‘ ἐκείνους efficit καὶ τὰς μετ’ αὐτῶν ἐνθυμίας.

‘ Quamobrem haud satis à nobis cautum fuerit, si subi-
 ‘ tam nimis fidem adhibeamus persuasioni obfirmatæ,
 ‘ aut validæ imaginationi, sive exultationi sive zelo ad-
 ‘ mistæ; præcipuè verò quando sensus noster internus
 ‘ adeò sit Errori obnoxius, aliarum facultatum suffragia
 ‘ prius petenda, quibus renuentibus, saltem ἐπιχειρῶν oportet
 ‘ & sustinere ab assensu. Verùm ne quid derogare
 ‘ videar spiritui sancto, opportunè hîc loci monendum
 ‘ censeo, quàm nulli sumus, quàm nihil possumus ejus
 ‘ ope destituti, adeò ut nemo quisquam sit, qui solis na-
 ‘ turæ viribus semet ad Christum recipit, nisi superveniat
 ‘ Divini Auxilii gratia. Quod ut abundè testatum facit
 ‘ S. Scriptura, ita neque minus suffragatur Ratio. Illud
 ‘ utique certissimum est effatum, contra sensum & expe-
 ‘ rientiam frustra argumentis contendî. Etiam si igitur
 ‘ quispiam (quod de Zenone fertur) non dari motum
 ‘ probare conetur, aut quantitatem, materiam, tempus
 ‘ extra rerum naturam subtili disputatione eliminare
 ‘ fategerit, nunquam tamen effecerit, ut quisquam, ocu-
 ‘ lis manibusque omnem prorsus fidem derogat. Eodem
 ‘ igitur jure cùm expertum unicuique sit sensus suos
 ‘ gratâ admodum voluptate ab externis hujuscæ mundi
 ‘ objectis perfundi, neque tamen rebus altioris & nobi-
 ‘ lioris Naturæ perinde affici : quantumcunque severio-
 ‘ ris Rationis monitis renitatur, animûmque ab istis
 ‘ tanquam infra suam dignitatem positis conetur revo-
 ‘ care; nihilo tamen magis illum inde dimovebit, quam
 ‘ Diogenem Zenonis argumenta. Quinetiam quamdiu
 ‘ validus ille vegetusque externarum voluptatum gustus
 ‘ animum

' animum abdukerit, non vacat susurranti intus monitori
 ' aures adhibere: vel forte os illi nullo negotio obtu-
 ' rare dabitur, aut in suas partes pellicere; sensu nempe
 ' sive externo sive interno ducimur, non inertī & insi-
 ' pida ratione, quæ de spiritualis vitæ deliciis perinde
 ' scit differere, ac cæcus de coloribus. Et sanè operam
 ' omninò lusus est, qui id agit ut cæcum instruat,
 ' quàm jucunda res sit solem intueri, & lucis usuram
 ' capere, & variegatis inde objectis oblectari: solus
 ' oculus hisce demonstrandis ita par est, ut Animus inde
 ' afficiatur. Nunquam omnigenæ voluptatis manci-
 ' pium eò perduxeris, ut in Mathematicæ demonstra-
 ' tionis ratione intelligendâ, majus aliquod oblectamen-
 ' tum habesse existimet, quam Bacchi aut Veneris ludo.
 ' Nempe si animi sui sententiam palam facere non de-
 ' trectarent, compertum facile esset totius humani Gene-
 ' ris Rationem, instantis sensus Imperio subesse. Adeoq;
 ' nisi Deus ita Animos nostros affecerit, ut amaritudinem
 ' quandam in terrenis hisce voluptatibus persentiscamus,
 ' & rerum cœlestium dulcedinem prælibemus, fieri non
 ' potest, ut vel ab istis ablactemur, vel hæc admodum
 ' appetamus. Addo insuper, morigeros nosmet præ-
 ' buisse voluntati Patris nostri qui est in Cœlis, sola via
 ' est facilis & aperta, quæ in Divinarum Revelationum
 ' veritatum, sensumque deducat.

' Quippe res cœlestes haud aliter cognoscuntur, quàm
 ' gustu interno & sapido lumine; quale impertire solet
 ' Divina Gratia humilibus & defæcatis animis. Quin &
 ' de viâ flectentes monere, lumina menti præferre, fi-
 ' dem corroborare, efficere ut Argumenta Pietatis aliàs
 ' ad quemlibet levissimæ tentationis ventum difflanda,
 ' penitus impressa fixæque animo maneant, hæc & si-
 ' milia accepta serimus eidem Sancto Spiritui. Quæ
 ' omnia nobis cœlitus illabi faciliè agnoscimus, utpote
 ' divino

' divino isti Principio quod Dei in nobis reliquum est
 ' consentanea. Sed si quando huic veritatis Criterio
 ' nuncium remittimus, & Rationem nostram præpoten-
 ' tis phantasie ductui & imperio subijcimus, valeat oportet
 ' omnis Religio nisi quæ sub specie Divini afflatus ab
 ' atra bile & sæculentis sanguinis halitibus inspiretur.
 ' Adeoque perinde nobis erit quævis Religio: Rationis
 ' utique Judicio abdicato, quo Argumento innotescet
 ' Religionis Christianæ supra Mahumetismum aut Gen-
 ' tilismum præstantia? Sed ne verborum ambiguitate
 ' laboremus, sciendum est nihil à nobis percipi præ-
 ' terquam Mentis nostræ Operationes; proinde Spiri-
 ' tum prout est in nobis Principium cognoscendi, aut
 ' esse sensum internum aut rationem: Hæ enim (nisi
 ' addere etiam libet instinctum naturalem) solæ sunt
 ' Facultates, quæ luminis Divini radiis collustrari pos-
 ' sunt; Ut revertamur igitur unde sumus digressi, cum
 ' sensus noster internus adeo lubricus sit & fallax, qui
 ' Testimonio ejus auscultaverit, reclamantibus licet reli-
 ' quis facultatibus, næ ille homo est fide nimis incautâ
 ' & temerariâ.

' At inquires, concedamus probari quidem hoc Argu-
 ' mento, nihil posse credi sine Ratione; hinc tamen non
 ' constare rem ipsam credendam non posse rationi adver-
 ' sari; quoniam Deo testanti adhibenda est fides, quam-
 ' vis maximè sit rationi contrarium quod credendum
 ' proponitur: quia fieri potest ut intellectus humanus
 ' cum maximè videtur ratione uti, hallucinetur. Sed
 ' nefas est suspicari Deum sapientissimum posse falli;
 ' aut veracissimum cum sit, velle fallere.

' Equidem nihil potuisset dici verius; Deo enim
 ' testanti nemo est tam incredulus, aut sui plenus, quin
 ' fidem habeat: At illud in dubium vocatur, quomodo
 ' rem divino testimonio confirmatam dignoscamus?

' Num

Num ex solis miraculis ? at iis inclaruiffe comperies
 Pythagoram , Apollonium Tyanæum qui Magicâ suâ
 labantem Idololatriam erexit ; quem ausi sunt sui tem-
 poris homines Christo opponere, uti constat ex *Hie-
 roclis* & *Philostrati* libris in hunc finem compositis.
 Magos utriusque Orbis in medium proferre possim,
 qui omnes quamplurima operati sunt Naturæ vi-
 res excedentia , non aliâ tamen quam Dæmonum
 Virtute.

Si quis itaque Divinam legationem obtenderit, tria
 sunt quibus Authoritatem ejus probari oportet ; Mi-
 racula, Vitæ Sanctitas, & Doctrina Deo digna, hu-
 mano generi utilis & accommodata. Quæ omnia si
 affuerint, credendus est à Deo missus. Nulla utique
 via jam reliqua est, quâ fallacia detegatur. At nulla-
 tenus consonum videtur divinæ veracitati & bonitati
 testimonium ferre mendacio, aut hominem in rebus
 maximi momenti deceptioni exponere nullâ diligentia
 evitandæ. Itaque non solummodo spectanda sunt
 miracula, sed & vita, doctrinæque hominis cui fidem
 facere videntur. Proinde Servator noster validissimo
 usus est Argumento adversus Phariseos objicientes,
 eum Dæmonia ejicere virtute Principis Dæmonum :
 Quod scilicet Regnum internis dissidiis distractum
 stabiliri nequit ; cum itaq ; ipse Doctrinâ & operibus suis
 se regno Satanæ opponeret, fieri non potuit ut Satanæ
 Virtute Dæmonia ejiceret. Itaq ; ut judicium feramus
 de Divino Testimonio , Res ipsa consideranda venit
 quam attestatur ; quæ si quid habeat immotis Naturæ
 Principiis adversum, miracula hæc præstigiæ Dæmo-
 num, non Dei opus credenda sunt. *Beræenses* laudati sunt
 à Spiritu Sancto , *ὡς ευχόμενοι ἢ ἄλλαν ἢ Θεωλονόμην*, tan-
 quam magis ingenui & liberalioris indolis, quia inqui-
 rebant in *Pauli* & *Silæ* verba, num quæ ab ipsis dicta
 C sunt

‘ sunt ita se haberent. Quidni & nos eadem Commenda-
 ‘ datio pertingat, si à quocunque dictata, tanquam le-
 ‘ gem divinitus acceptam, severissimo examini subji-
 ‘ ciamus ?

‘ 3. Tertium Argumentum haurimus è Naturâ Re-
 ‘ ligionis, quam convenit esse materiam Electionis &
 ‘ Oblectamenti. At fieri non potest ut quis semet ob-
 ‘ lectet in eo quod Naturæ suæ Principiis contradicit.
 ‘ Revera Conclusiones novisse, etsi nihil contineant ra-
 ‘ tioni dissonum, nisi porrò sciamus è quibus fluant
 ‘ Principiis, parum gratum est intellectui nostro. Sic
 ‘ Mathematico Ingenio volupe est, non Geometriæ
 ‘ problemata, tanquam certissimæ Veritatis effata me-
 ‘ moriter tenere, sed eorum demonstrationes longâ
 ‘ Propositionum serie deductas comprehendisse animo.
 ‘ Maximè itaque divinæ Bonitati consonum videtur,
 ‘ eousque homini in Evangelio indulgisse, ut eorum
 ‘ cum Ratione Harmoniam comperire possit, quæ ei
 ‘ credenda proponuntur. In eo præcipuè differt genus
 ‘ humanum à brutis, quod sit Religionis capax. At
 ‘ verò quod maximè homini proprium est & naturale,
 ‘ ut sit facultatibus ejus adversum, omni à Ratione ab-
 ‘ horret. Num cui in mentem venire potest Deum in
 ‘ animo habuisse intellectum humanum non-percipien-
 ‘ dis impedire atque implicare subtilitatibus ? Num
 ‘ quid ideo excellentius quia omnem excedit intelli-
 ‘ gentiam ? Illène putandus est Religionis capacissimus,
 ‘ qui aut superstitiosus maximè aut oscitanter credulus ?
 ‘ Num exuenda est natura humana, ut imbuamur Re-
 ‘ ligione ? Certè infedisse animo vel leviculam hujus-
 ‘ modi suspicionem, Religionis ludibrium est & oppro-
 ‘ brium. Ea esse debet uniuscujusque de Religione suâ
 ‘ existimatio, quod nihil absurdi, indecori, aut rectæ
 ‘ Rationi repugnantis continere credatur : Quantum
 ‘ enim

enim redit in Religionis dedecus, metuere sibi à Rationis Tribunali? Ea mihi semper Religio amplectenda visa est, quæ à severissimâ Ratione in iudicium vocata, causam obtineat. Quorsum Benignissimus Deus largitus est nobis Rationis facultatem, si nefas sit, cum res nostra maximè agitur, eam munere suo fungi? Aut quænam alia facultas reliqua est cujus ductu veram Religionem investigemus? Si Rationis partes deferamus, annon educationi, superstitioni, aut afflatui cuidam Fanatico, omnis accepta ferenda erit Religio?

At Ratio nostra, inquires, ex quo à Deo defecimus, caligat nimium, ideòq; pares non sumus de rebus Divinis iudicium ferendo.

Ergone luce Meridianâ destituti, languidiores solis radii contemptui erunt, & tenebræ reputandæ? Num cui paulò obtusior est acies, omni prorsus lumine cassus censebitur? Aut oculi claudendi penitus, quia Aquilæ carent perspicacitate? Verum annon Religio eâ est naturâ quæ summam postulet diligentiam & curam, utpote quæ res sit maximi momenti, in cujus disquisitione errasse summum est infortunium? Et quem in finem datæ sunt Facultates, si nulli esse possunt adjuvamento, cum iis maximè est opus? Num quis alius nostro loco iudicium feret? Num alterius intellectus meam diriget voluntatem? Num alienis oculis videbo? Aut alterius cuiuspiam lumine præeunte ambulo? Num affectus inordinatos argumentis non intellexis edomabo? Num ad normam Principiorum, quæ alius mente concepit, vitam meam disponam? Annon proprio iudicio, intellectu, lumine, hæc omnia peragenda sunt? Num verò hoc fieri potest sine usu Rationis? Quis potius eccujus Facultatis usus est in delectu Religionis & Principiorum ad quorum

exemplar vitam instituendam esse judicamus, præterquam solius Rationis? Religio res est liberæ & ingenuæ indolis, nemini vim inferre patitur, intellectum solâ formâ & pulchritudine suâ captivat. Qui secus senserit, falsò ei crimen impegit, & in Religionis locum Superstitionem suffecit.

4. Quartum Argumentum desumo ex Naturâ Rectæ Rationis; Unde firmissimè demonstratur fieri non posse, ut quid à Deo revelatum sit ei contrarium. Delibati enim sunt hominum Animi ex mente Divinâ; Estque Recta Ratio cœlesti stirpe oriunda, ad increatâ sapientiæ & intelligentiæ imaginem efficta: Est Radius quidam Intellectualis solis, lucis primigeniæ similitudinem referens. Divina enim sapientia nihil aliud est, quam Idearum rerum Comprehensio, unâ cum earum rationibus, affectionibus, mutuisque relationibus, sive concordix sive repugnantix, quæ à rerum ipsarum naturâ immediatè emanant, sicut Relationes posito Fundamento & Terminò. Atque hæc affectiones unâ cum ipsarummet rerum Ideis, eodem intuitu perlustrat Divinus Intellectus, earumque ordinem & reciprocaiones discernit. Atque hoc quid aliud est quam Ratio fixa & stabilis, rerum omnium rationes nexûsque immoto oculo simul advertens? Hujus verò accurata effigies est Recta Ratio, menti humanæ insita; quæ etsi res omnes earumque Rationes unico actu retgere & nôsse nequeat, eos tamen successione & per vices evolvit. Harum verò Idearum & Rationum quotquot simul intuemur, clarè & distinctè percipimus sive consensum sive dissonantiam, atque ita unius ex altero sive probationem sive refutationem instituímus. Proinde Ratio Humana verè imitatur atque exprimit Sapientiam Divinam; hoc solo Discrimine, quòd quæ illa eodem simplici actu

* actu simul comprehendit, ista operosis deducit con-
 * sequentiis. Deum itaque quicquam revelare Rectæ
 * Rationi contrarium, perinde cogitatu impium est, ac
 * Deum mendacem fore, internisq; sapientiæ suæ concep-
 * tibus contradicendum. Recta enim Ratio & Divina Sa-
 * pientia idem ferunt de Rebus, Judicium; & si quid
 * secus pronuncietur ab intellectu humano, non id sit
 * Rationis culpâ sed Ignorantiæ. Ideoque si quid sub
 * specie Divinæ Revelationis propositum videtur Ratio-
 * ni contradicere, suspicandum est me non satis capere
 * mentem ejus, ideóque ulteriori indagini insistendum;
 * idque credendum Deum intendisse quod Naturæ Prin-
 * cipiis maxime consonum videbitur. Nollem tamen
 * Intellectum Humanum nimium sibimet arrogare, &
 * quod Captum ejus excedit, audaci facinore continuo
 * damnare. Quippe si potissima pars eorum quæ Di-
 * vino Testimonio tradita & consignata sunt, Deo sint
 * digna, & facultatibus nostris consentanea, quoad re-
 * liqua Fidem implicitam adhibere fas est Divinæ Reve-
 * lationi, iisque, etsi à Ratione abhorreere videantur, ni-
 * hilominus assensum præbere; saltem juxta sententiam
 * Spiritûs Sancti, etsi quæ tandem illa sit, haud dum satis
 * capiamus.

* 5. Quintum atque ultimum Argumentum à Naturâ
 * ipsius Christianæ Religionis depromendum duximus.
 * Et primò quoad ejus præcepta, eorum Puritas, Sancti-
 * tas; & tum privata, tum publica, commoditas cuilibet
 * attentius consideranti tam faciliè comprobatur, ut
 * opus superfluum aggressurum me sentirem, si eorum cum
 * Ratione concordiam evincendo tempus contererem.
 * Præsertim cum id jam abundè satis demonstratum sit
 * à Doctissimo nostro Hammondo, quem hâc de re con-
 * sulatis velim. Hinc verò necessario sequitur Promissa
 * & Comminationes esse etiam oppidò rationi consona;
 * utpote

utpote quæ hæc præceptis muniendis inserviant. Sed quoad hæc tria Religionis Christianæ membra, etsi longè præcellant, tamen non planè diversa sunt ab aliis quæ olim obtinuerint Religionibus, præsertim istâ Sapientum & Doctorum apud Paganos Philosophorum; qui præcepta moralia severa & sublimia admodum tradebant, & præmiorum & pœnarum post hanc vitam fidem ostentabant. Adeo ut quicquid dici potest in Priscæ Pietatis & Sapientiæ patrocinium, potiori jure vindicaverit sibi Religio Christiana. Lecta enim S. Scriptura ab ingeniis maximè profanis, & Atheis, confessionem expressit, præstantissima in eâ continere Virtutis & Pietatis præcepta.

Ideoque potius breviter disserendum cenfeo de Christianismo sub ratione Religionis determinatæ & ab aliis discrepantis, ut hæc etiam in parte compareat ejus cum Rectâ Ratione conformitas.

Primò verò, quid cogitari potest magis rationi accommodum, quam quod Deus alicui Provinciâ delegaret docendi atque instruendi Genus humanum in suo erga Deum atque invicem Munere fungendo? Degeneres enim Adami Posterì valde ignari sunt officii sui, (unde per omnia secula notantur ridiculi Superstitionis ritus) ac proinde indigent Doctore; atque etiam pervicaciter & obstinatè dediti sunt carnis Cupiditatibus, adeoque ejusmodi postulant Legislatorem, qui Venerationem & Timorem incutiat. Utque Legislator jam dictus sit illibatæ atque innocuæ Vitæ, ita enim & nobis exemplo est, & Doctrinæ suæ Authoritatem conciliat: Ut sine semine virili Divini Spiritûs Potentiâ in Utero Virginis formetur, sic enim à facie humanâ, & ordinario Naturæ Cursu segregatus, in majori honore habebitur: Ut intimè Uniatur Naturæ Divinæ, sive τῷ θεῷ λόγῳ, atque ita verè & propriè Deus fiat;

fiat; sic enim maxima comparatur dictis Majestas.
 Nec fieri potest ut Deus viâ Naturæ Humanæ conve-
 nientiori voluntatem suam significet; Nequit enim
 nobis comparere sine corporeo velamine: Et quodnam
 aptius domicilium quam caro nostra? Quidni itaque
 Deus uteretur aliquo è nobis, uti Anima Corpore, tan-
 quam Instrumento, quo interveniente consilium suum
 declaret? Nihil hic habetur aut Rationi contrarium
 aut conceptu difficile. Cur enim magis vexaret In-
 tellectum conjunctio Deitatis cum Naturâ Christi,
 quam Humanæ Animæ cum Corpore? Quo enim
 superioris est Naturæ, eò facilius semet insinuare po-
 tuit. Cæterum quamvis Persona hæc tam illustris sit,
 congruum tamen videtur fore, eum quoad Vitam Ex-
 ternam humilis sortis, & conditionis obscuræ, iisdem
 malis & infirmitatibus, quibus nosmet ipsi, expositum.
 Sic enim magis provocamur ad Dei Amorem, & gra-
 vissima mala patienter ferenda, salutis nostræ duce
 innocentissimo nostri gratiâ tam multa passo. Adde
 quod Argumentum sit summæ in hoc Servatore fidu-
 ciæ; Ipse enim pressioibus absolutus, novit quomodo
 subveniat afflictis. Porro jure postulamus certiores nos
 faciat vitæ æternæ & immortalis; in dubiâ enim hac
 de re opinione hærebant Ethnici; quin & Resurrectio-
 nis Corporis sine quâ non consistit summa hominis
 felicitas. Et quàm promptus sit Deus ad ignoscendum
 peccatoribus credentibus & agentibus Pœnitentiam:
 Hec enim facile in dubium vocamus dum advertimus
 Peccati Malignitatem, & quàm rarefcit apud homines
 offensæ remissio, & quàm proni ipsi simus in vindictam.
 Similiter ut fidem stabiliat Præmiorum & Pœnarum
 post hanc Vitam; ut illa respicientes alliciamur ad
 obedientiam, ab istis verò metuentes deterreamur à
 peccato. Utque his omnibus fidem faceret tum mira-
 culis,

'culis, tum morte suâ; Miracula enim maximum sunt
 'Divinæ præsentiae testimonium: Quod verò Seipsum
 'morti tradiderit, indicio est sincere & sine fūco no-
 'biscum egisse. Præterea evidentissima Demonstratio
 'est Divinæ erga nos bonitatis, qui unigenito suo filio
 'non pepercit, ut nostro bono inserviret. Et validissi-
 'mum Argumentum ad crucifigendum Carnis Cupidi-
 'tates, & ad subeundam mortem pro fratribus & alio-
 'rum commodo. Porro quod hanc mortem suâ Sacrifi-
 'cium fiat ob Peccata, quo Deus se placatum agnoscit,
 'consilium erat infinitæ Sapientiæ & Bonitatis quo
 'Animæ argumenta Dissidentia à Sanctitate & Justi-
 'tiâ Divinâ petenti, opportunè succurritur, Justitiam
 'Divinam Christi Morte abundè propitiante. Itidem
 'Resurrectio ejus ex Mortuis admodum Rationi con-
 'sentit; Omnium enim prius actorum Certitudinem
 'consignavit; & nostræ Resurrectionis & vitæ post
 'mortem possibilitatem demonstravit. Quod verò su-
 'scitatus ad Dextram Dei sedeat, & omnes Preces &
 'Gratiarum Actiones per ipsius interventum offerendæ
 'Deo sint, & semper apud Deum Causam nostram agat,
 'hoc quoque Rationi consonat; dum nimirum Deus
 'non solum benevolum erga nos animum notum fecit,
 'sed etiam Fratrem nostrum ipsimet charissimum, nobis
 'amicissimum, ad Dextram suam posuit, per quem ala-
 'criter & cum fiduciâ ad Deum accedamus; Christo
 'interea nostri gratiâ Deum deprecante, ut quicquid
 'nobis contingit boni, primam suam Originem purè
 'Deitatis Amori debere agnoscamus. Deinde quòd
 'omnis Potestas tum in Terris tum etiam in Cœlis illi
 'commissa & credita sit, quòdque sit Dei quasi Vicarius,
 'Sanctorumque & Angelorum Caput, maximè hoc ce-
 'dit in nostrum solatium, quod qui nos tantopere amet,
 'potestate tantâ potiatur. Præterea cum citra Contro-
 'versiam

'verſam ſit eſſe quandam Politiam & Regimen apud
 'ipſos beatos ſanctos & Angelos, cui potius debetur
 'Principatus, quàm Jeſu Chriſto, qui Deus ipſe eſt Hu-
 'manâ Naturâ Veſtitus ? Quod verò aliquando Dæmo-
 'nes atq; homines vocandi ſint ad tremendum Dei Tri-
 'bunal, apprimè convenit ; hujus enim Cogitatio timo-
 'rem incutiet audaciſſimo Peccatori, & Judici ſolenni-
 'tas Deum vindicabit ab omni Malignitatis crimine,
 'adeò ut ſuâ ſe culpâ & ſtultitiâ in miſeriam lapſum ab
 'unuiſcujuſq; Conſcientiâ confeſſionem extorſerit. Quod
 'verò Chriſtus Judex ſedeat, nihil fingi potuiſſet accom-
 'modatius ; Nam cum Deus Verendum hoc Judicium ex-
 'ercere nequeat niſi ſub ſpecie viſibili, quodnam huic In-
 'ſtituto aptius Inſtrumentum eſſe potuit, quàm ea huma-
 'na Natura in quâ jamdudum Domicilium ſuum collo-
 'caverat ? Deniq; quod omnibus inimicis ſubjugatis,
 'Regnum Patri traderet, neq; hoc à Ratione abhorret ;
 'Nam cum Integrum ejus Munus Mediatorium huic
 'fini deſtinatum ſit, ut Creaturæ in peccatum lapſæ ad
 'Deum revocentur, & ſupremâ donentur felicitate ; hu-
 'jus ſanè operis Abſolutionem ſequi debet Regni ſui
 'Determinatio. Quæ tamen non ita intelligenda eſt,
 'quin Jeſus Chriſtus ~~condemnat~~ abinde ſemper Sancto-
 'rum atque Angelorum Princeps, & Caput permanſu-
 'rus ſit. Atq; ita ſingula fere Religionis Chriſtianæ Capita
 'breviter perluftravimus ; neq; iis diutius immorari
 'per veſtram patientiam licebit.

'Quod reliquum eſt Verbo expediam. Ex dictis li-
 'quidò conſtare arbitror, quam indecorum ſit & ho-
 'mine Chriſtiano indignum Religionem ſuam haurire
 'ſimul cum Materno lacte, eâmq; non ingenuæ Ratio-
 'nis Diſquiſitioni, ſed Patriæ inſtitutis, Educationi,
 'Magiſtrorum Dictatis, & hujus farinæ Præjudiciis ac-
 'ceptam ferre : Adeòq; non in veri falſiq; delectu, ſed

* præconceptâ Op inione pertinaciter tuendâ omnes ani-
 * mi vires nervósq; intendere. Ea quippe haud fides dicen-
 * da est aut putanda Deo grata, quæ Originem suam
 * debet inertî potius Casui, quàm Rei ipsius Evidentiæ
 * aut Argumentorum momentis; quinimò post humi-
 * lem, piam, attentamque rerum pensitationem, in er-
 * rorem lapsus, potiori Jure censendus est, si non laude,
 * saltem Excusatione dignus, quàm ipsi vel etiam Veri-
 * tati cæcus istiusmodi & fortuitus assensus. Neq; se-
 * cus edisserit Sacra Pagina dum jubemur ἐπεινᾶν τὰς γρα-
 * φὰς, πάντα δοκιμάζειν, & δοκιμάζειν τὰ πνεύματα. De-
 * niq; (ut hortatur Apostolus noster) parati simus ad re-
 * spondendum cuilibet, ejus spei, quæ in nobis est, Ra-
 * tionem petenti.

F I N I S.

I PET. III. 15.

Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.

I Am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, said the Great Apostle who was bred up at the feet of *Gamaliel*, and fully instructed in all the Learning both of the *Jews* and *Greeks*. Wherefore when the Christian Religion was every where oppressed and despised, when it was a scandal to the *Jews*, and foolishness to the *Greeks*; yet then despising the shame, and undervaluing the Afflictions he should meet withal, *I am ready* (says he) *to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome*, among the famous Philosophers and Orators of that City, renowned as well for Arts as Arms. For although there are not wanting some, the Eyes of whose Minds are covered with gross Ignorance and Darkness, yet glorying mightily in the mean while of their own Wisdom who endeavour to expose and ridicule the Doctrine of the Gospel as the greatest Piece of Folly; nevertheless he that laying aside his Prejudices and Tumultuous Affections, shall weigh the thing it self in the Balance of a sincere and incorrupted Judgment,

will really find the Christian Religion to be *the Power and Wisdom of God*, wholly agreeable to Reason and worthy of all belief.

As therefore the Great Doctor of the *Gentiles* has given us a rare Example of our Duty ; so the Apostle of the Circumcision in the Words now read, exhorts us, *Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, i.e.* Be prepared to render an Account, why you are Christians. And in this sense the word *ἀπαλογία* often occurs in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the Epistles of St. Paul, *Act. 22. 1. Phil. 1. 7. & 17. 2 Tim. 4. 16.* By [hope] I understand the Doctrine of the Gospel, in which sense the word is used, *Act. 26. 7.*

That Reason is to be made use of in the matter of Religion.

That the Christian Religion is so framed that a Rational Account may be given of it.

That every Man professing Christianity ought to be ready to give a Reason of his Faith.

These are the main Observables from this Text of Scripture. That in the choice of Religion, Reason is not to be laid aside, and, That the Christian Religion is such as contains in it nothing contrary to Right Reason, I shall undertake to make good in this present Discourse against Enthusiasts and Deists.

By [Reason] I do not mean the Dictates of Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Anger or any other naughty Affection ; for this is that Wisdom of the Flesh which is *enmity against God*, as well as against Right Reason ; these are those *λογισμοί* imaginations that are to be cast down, and this is that *νόημα* that thought which is to be

be brought into Captivity to the Obedience of Christ, ^{2 Cor. 10. 4. 5.} namely those Reasonings and Discourses which Minister to the Flesh and the lusts thereof. This is that *ἄλογος*, Natural Man, who receives not the ^{1 Cor. 2. 14.} things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are Spiritually discerned: For this is that Animal Man which is guided only by his sensual Appetite; and *λογος* (as those know well enough who are conversant in the Writings of the Ancients) signifies that Faculty of the Soul which is adapted to the Body. And he that is such cannot be subject to the Spirit of God, nor Obedient to the Gospel, forasmuch as the things contained there, are mere foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned, *i. e.* they are discerned by an humble Mind, composed Affections, clear Light, and Pure, and Internal sense.

This is that Wisdom puffed up with Pride and Vain-glory, unto which the *preaching of the Cross is foolishness*. ^{1 Cor. 1. 18.} For the obscure life and ignominious Death of Christ was always counted ridiculous by a Mind turgid, & swell'd with higher Notions and conceits. Lastly, this is that *Wisdom of this World*, and of the Princes of this World, who are intoxicated with vile Affections, and an ^{1 Cor. 1. 20. & 2. 6.} Opinionative Knowledge, which God and every wise Man looks upon as foolishness. Such Wisdom and Ratiocinations as these, are not the Off-spring of true Reason, but the Fallacies and Paralogisms of a Mind blinded with lusts.

By Right Reason therefore I understand that innate Faculty of the Soul of Man, by which it discerns the Reasons and Mutual Affections of things, and argues, and concludes one thing from another, And now I say that Christian Religion is not contrary to Reason thus understood.

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There are two usual Forms of Speech pertinent to this occasion, *viz.* that something may either be above or contrary to Reason.

But that we may speak freely and according to the nature of the thing it self ; whatever is propounded to us as matter of belief ought not to be so much as above Reason, unless these words be taken in this Acception, namely, That a thing is so high and remote from common sense, that bare Intellect could not light upon it. There are verily some Articles of Faith which may be said to be above Reason, as to some Modes of the Thing to be believed that are not clearly revealed. Thus for Example, it exceeds the strength of Reason to give an exact Account of the manner of our Resurrection & Glorification, or to make a perfect Description of the Joys and Pleasures of the Future life, or to shew how the three *Hypostases* are one God, or the Divine and Humane Nature one Christ : But of these things as there is no express Revelation, so neither is there an Explicit Faith required ; And besides, This Obscurity is not a little subservient for the begetting and conciliating Reverence and Esteem to the Christian Doctrine.

But there is nothing to which an Explicit Faith is required, which so far exceeds Reason, as that it is not able to form any Conception of it. For Faith consists in Assent ; the Assent follows the Judgment, but no Judgment can be made of a thing that is not at all known or understood ; therefore whatever exceeds all Knowledge, must needs likewise exceed all Belief. And he that can persuade himself that he believes a thing that he does not understand, believes he knows not what ; and miserably imposes upon himself with a company of words prettily put together, and giving a great sound, which yet have no Conception answering to them in the mind, and

and while he dreams of believing some unintelligible Mystery, he only pursues mere shadows of words from which when the veil is withdrawn, all Faith and Sense presently vanishes.

But that the Christian Religion contains nothing Repugnant to right Reason, and that the use of Reason is necessary in the Affair of Religion, I shall endeavour to prove by these following Arguments.

First, If God should propound any thing to be believed that were Contradictory to Right Reason, one of these four Absurdities (nor can I think of a fifth) will necessarily follow upon it; Either that God can be deceived, or may deceive, or that the Reasons, and Affections of things are not Eternal and Immutable; Or lastly, that our Faculties are obnoxious to Error when they have the clearest and most distinct Perception of their proper Objects. The first and second of these are contrary to that Notion and Idea of God which we have implanted in our Minds.

As for the third, there is indeed a certain Person who asserts the Reasons of things to be contingent and Arbitrary, and that Blasphemy, Lying, Perjury, nay, a hatred of the Divine Majesty may be reckoned into the Account of Virtues, and become a Worship pleasing and acceptable to God. But good God! What rash and abominable Positions do we hear! Such as are rather to be buried in Eternal Oblivion, or not to be named without Horror and Astonishment. Search the Ancient Councils, and you shall find no Heresie more deserving an *Anathema* then this. Nay the very Jaws of Hell could not belch out any thing more detestable and blasphemous. For this robs God of his Wisdom, Immutability, Goodness, and all those other Perfections we attribute to him: It overthrows the Principles and Foundations of all Discourse; makes Contradictions become

become probable ; destroys all Trust and Confidence in the Divine Promises, and banishes all Hope and Expectation of Future Happiness. That all these Consequences do naturally flow from this Principle we have proved elsewhere, and the same will appear very evident to any that shall attentively consider it.

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The Fourth, That God should plant such Faculties in us as may then deceive us when they most clearly and distinctly perceive their Respective Objects, is contrary to the Divine Goodness and Veracity. Moreover, it is impossible that God should reveal any thing as an Object of Faith, unless we first suppose, that we must give credit to our own Faculties. For nothing can be delivered to us from God, unless it be conformable to some Faculty or other : But and if that Faculty may be deceived when it most clearly and distinctly perceives its Object, how are we assured that this Deception may not happen in the present Case, especially when Reason, the chiefest of our Faculties, clearly and evidently finds that to be false which is offered under the specious Pretext of Divine Revelation ? For this Revelation must be conveyed to us either by the Ear, or some other External sense, or else by the Inward Imagination : But ought we not much rather to conclude that to be an Illusion which is contrary to the Principles of Evident and sound Reason, then to fancy that our Reason which is given us of God for a Guide, should be deceived in its clearest and most distinct conception of things ? For if we throw away Reason, there is no other Directive Faculty, but External sense and its Inclinations, and blind, and uncertain Phantasie which is obnoxious to innumerable Deceptions. Wherefore bidding adieu to Reason do we not evidently expose our selves to the Illusion of every Juggling Spirit, who

who by crafty Tricks shall counterfeit a Divine Power and Assistance! If therefore *Moses* ordain'd his Law as a Touchstone to try the Truth of a Prophet, advising his People not to hearken to any who should do Signs and Miracles, if he taught any thing contrary to that Law which he himself had delivered to them from God: Ought not we in like manner to examine all those that pretend Divine Authority, by the Law of Nature and Right Reason, as by an infallible and unerring Rule? (By the way it is to be noted, that I here speak of incorrupted Reason, freed from all evil Affections and inlightened by the Spirit of God.) For without the help of this Guide, our Minds perhaps may be filled with a Great Measure of Confidence and Obstinate Persuasion, but can never attain any settled Assurance that they are in the right way. Neither is it any thing to the Purpose, to say that Reason may indeed judge of Humane, but not of Divine Things. For though this be true of Reason darkned with evil Passions, and indubitable in such things as are rather Objects of Taste, and Internal sense, than Reason, yet it is quite otherwise where the Assent of the Understanding alone is required. For whatever is proposed as matter of Explicit Belief, there must in the first place be a Conception formed of it; but now whatever we can frame a Conception of, there Reason either discovers the Harmony of the Terms of which it consists, and its Agreement with some common Notion, and so pronounces the Thing to be true; or else it finds the Terms to be contradictory and Repugnant, and that the Thing is Diametrically opposite to some innate Principle, and consequently judges it to be false. Or else it perceives the Terms to be partly agreeing and partly dissonant, or to have no Relation at all to one another, and from hence affirms

and allows the Thing to be either Probable or Possible. And now if any Part either of the Probability or Possibility shall be confirmed by some Illustrious Miracle, then Reason adds its Suffrage that it ought to be believed. As for Example: let us imagine, what is already done, a certain Person compassing Sea and Land, and wholly intent upon this very Thing to teach and instruct Mankind in their Duty to God, and to one another, promising Eternal Blessedness upon Condition of Obedience, he himself in the mean time leading a most innocent and inoffensive life, and withal declaring himself to be a Law-giver sent from God, and to have all Power both in Heaven and Earth committed into his hands, and that Prayers and Praises are all to be offered to God through his Mediation. Here is nothing in this that implies a Contradiction, or is repugnant with the Principles of Nature, though Reason may be apt to suspect some Pride and Affectation of Divine Glory and Worship to lie underneath. But now when that which is barely looked upon as Possible shall be effected and accomplished by Divine Power, and the Author of this Doctrine unable to work such stupendious Miracles as never Man before saw, Reason will presently conclude that the Thing it self is very credible. Yet not withstanding if this Person should have taught any thing contrary to the Dictates of Right Reason and introduced either a Profane and impious Doctrine, or countenanced a licentious, and disorderly way of living, and that he might the better persuade us to these things, should have gone about to confirm his Divine Mission by Miracles, our Reason would immediately have suggested to us that he was an Impostor and Deceiver; because nothing can be promulgated by God or by any Person commissioned by him, which is contrary to the Law of Nature or Right Reason. And

And though it may be urged, that it is contrary to the Divine Veracity to bear Witness to a lie, and therefore whatever is grounded upon the Credit of Miracles (since these are the only visible signs of the Divine will) must of necessity be supposed to derive from God; yet because I cannot be assured whether these things may not be permitted for a Tryal, or for some other end unknown to me, yet agreeable to Divine Wisdom, I should rather distrust this way of Reasoning, than admit any thing from the Authority of this Argument as Divine; which contradicted the clear Principles of Nature.

2. A Second Argument: The Nature of Man is so framed that it cannot yield Assent to any thing without the Conduct of Reason. Which that it may more clearly appear we shall borrow some few things hugely suitable to our present Purpose from the Famous Lord *Herbert* in his Book of Truth.

According to his Opinion therefore there are four Faculties by which we come to the Knowledge of things; *Natural Instinct*, or that Faculty which discerneth Common Notions, *Internal Sense*, *External Sense*, and *Discourse*.

From whence may be collected this great Truth, more valuable than whole Volumes written concerning the Soul and its Faculties; *That which cannot be known, neither by Natural Instinct, Internal Sense, External Sense, nor by Discourse, cannot any way be proved properly true.* Now since these are Faculties, and that whatever is propounded to be believed, must necessarily correspond and be conformable to some one of these, Reason affirms that to each of them being rightly disposed, credit is to be given, viz. to *Natural Instinct*, to *Internal* and *External Sense*. Moreover Reason itself (according to its proper Office) making use of the Auxiliaries of the

aforesaid Faculties, and relying upon first and self-evident Principles, summons Discourse, and deduces Conclusions. Natural Instinct is always to be believed; but sense, as well External as Internal, may sometimes be deceived, and therefore sometimes deserves Credit, and at other times not; to discriminate and discern the Differences of which is in the Power of Reason alone, there being no other Faculty to preside in this Case. From whence it follows: First, That the Mind cannot assent to any thing where Right Reason, or at least some shadow of it, does not give a preceding light; And then, That Christian Religion requiring Faith, cannot force, or compel assent against the Dictates of Right Reason.

But against these Clear and Natural Sentiments the Enthusiasts importunately urge the Spirit, and indeed every man will pretend the Testimony of the Spirit that he may not seem to be less favour'd of God than others. If we demand how they know the Testimony of the Spirit, they Answer, After the same manner as we discern the splendor of the Sun, by its own proper light. But we insist further; That witness which the Spirit bears to it self, is it a strong and obstinate Persuasion, or an Ecstasical Joy, or a kind of Zeal and Fervor of Mind; or Lastly, a clear and savoury Persuasion of the Dignity and Excellency of those things that are revealed? If this last, it is very consentaneous and agreeable to what we have already spoken; But as for the other particulars, it is very well known what an Innumerable company of Men there have been, who upon such like grounds have very pertinaciously affirmed themselves to be compounded of Glass, or Butter, to be Dogs, Cats, Kings, Emperors, Popes, the Paraclete, the Messiah, the last and greatest Prophet, the Judge
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of Quick and Dead, nay, even God himself. And we find most of these to have been actuated with an Excess of Joy, and transported with a seemingly Divine Fervor. All which Effects are so far from the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that they are no better then Frenzies and Symptoms of Melancholy, and derive their Original from no higher Principle then the undue Fermentation of the Blood and Spirits, and chiefly from that Melancholy which above all other disposes the Minds of Men to fancy Divine Influxes and Illuminations. For this (as *Aristotle* affirms) is wont to produce *ἐκστασις καὶ τὸς μετ' αὐτῆς ἐνθουσιας*.

Wherefore to be too easie and credulous in believing an obstinate Persuasion or strong Imagination, whether there be a mixture of exultancy or zeal with it, would argue a great want of Caution and Circumspection: But we are to note especially, where our Internal Sense is so obnoxious to Error, That the Suffrages of other Faculties are first to be obtained, upon whose refusal it behooves us at least to suspend our Assent.

But that we may not seem to derogate from the Holy Spirit, we may fitly here suggest what mere Nothings we are, and how little it is we can do without his help, so that there is no Man whatever that can come to Christ without the supervenient Assistance of Divine Grace. And as this is clearly attested in the Sacred Scripture, so it is no less Consentaneous to Reason; forasmuch as this is a most certain Truth, that 'tis a great Vanity to dispute against Sense and Experience. And though some one (as 'tis reported of *Zeno*) should go about to prove there is no such thing as Motion, and should endeavour by subtilty of Argumentation to banish Quantity, Matter and Time out of the Nature of Things, yet he could never induce any sober Person

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Person wholly to distrust his Eyes and Hands. By the same Reason, since every Man finds his Senses highly gratified with that Pleasure flowing from External and Mundane Objects, and yet not to be alike affected with things of a higher and nobler Nature; how much resistance soever he may make by Virtue of the Counsels of severer Reason, and strive to alienate his Mind from those, as things less comporting with the Dignity of his Nature, yet he will be no more able to reclaim himself, then the Arguments of *Zeno* were able to move *Dio- genes*. Moreover, so long as that brisk and lively relish of sensual Pleasures draws away the Mind, it will not be at leisure to attend to the soft Whispers of that gentle *Monitor* within. Or perhaps it will easily stop its mouth, or at least allure it to its own side: For we are led by Sense, either External or Internal, not by dry and insipid Reason, which gives much what the same Account of the Delights of a Spiritual life, as a blind Man would do of colours. And doubtless it would be but lost labour to teach a blind Man how pleasant a thing it is to behold the Sun, and to enjoy the benefit of the Light, and recreate himself with the Variety of Objects. It is only the Eye that is sufficient to make such a Demonstration of these things as may affect the Mind. You can never persuade a Man that is a perfect Slave to his Pleasures that there is any greater Delight and Satisfaction in Understanding the Reason of a Mathematical Demonstration, than there is in Wine or the Caresses of a Mistress. For if they were not bashful in declaring the Sentiments of their own Minds, it would soon appear that the Reason of all Mankind is subjugated to the Imperious Dictates of present sense. And unless God so affect our Minds, as that on the one hand they may find some allay & uneasiness in these Ter-
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restial Pleasures, and on the other give them some Preliminarys of the sweetness of things Celestial, it can hardly be, that we should either be weaned from those, or very much desirous of these. I add moreover, that to render our selves obedient to the will of our heavenly Father, is the only plain and easie way to the attaining a true Knowledge and Vital Sense of Divine Revelations.

For heavenly things are not otherwise to be known but by such an inward relish and affecting light as Divine Grace usually imparts to defecate & humble Minds. And further, to admonish them that are going astray, to illuminate the Eyes of the Mind, to strengthen the Faith, and to fix and impress the Arguments of Godliness upon the Soul, which otherwise would be driven away with the least Wind of a Temptation; these and such like things we owe to the Benign Influence of the Holy Spirit; All which we readily acknowledge to descend from Heaven by that Congruity they retain with that Divine Principle the only remain of God in us. But if we discharge this *Criterion* of Truth, and subject our Reason to the Conduct and Guidance of prevailing Phantasies, we must bid adieu to all Religion but that which under pretence of Divine Inspiration is nothing but the Result of Melancholy, and the feculent steams of the Blood. Thus all Religions will be alike; For by what Argument shall the Excellency of Christianity appear above *Mahometism* or *Gentilism*, when the use of Reason is laid aside?

But that we may not spend time in Ambiguity of Words, we must know, That nothing is perceived by us, but the Operations of our Mind; and therefore the Spirit as 'tis a Principle of Knowledge in us, is either Internal Sense or Reason; for these are the only Faculties.

Faculties (unless we will add Natural Instinct) capable of being inlightned with the Beams of Divine Light. To return therefore from whence we have digressed; since our Internal Sense is so slippery and fallacious, that Man that shall hearken to its Testimony against the Voice of all his other Faculties, must be a Person of a very Imprudent and Temerarious Belief.

But you will say, 'We grant indeed that it appears from this Argument that nothing can be believed without Reason, but it does not follow from hence, that the thing to be believed is not contrary to Reason; because we ought to credit a Divine Attestation, though the matter attested be never so much Contrary to Reason: For it may happen that Humane Understanding may then Err, when it seems most of all to make use of Reason. But it were Impious to imagine that God who is most wise can be deceived, or being most Veracious can deceive.

It is confest that nothing could be spoken truer; for no Man is so incredulous or self-conceited, but he will presently give credit to Divine Attestation: But the Question is how we shall know when a thing is confirmed by Divine Testimony? Will it appear from Miracles alone? We shall find *Pythagoras*, *Apollonius Tyanus*, who endeavoured by Magick to keep up the Credit of decaying and sinking Idolatry was famous for these; whose Contemporaries durst oppose him to Christ, as may appear from the Books of *Hierocles* and *Philostatus* written of this subject: I might likewise introduce the Magicians of both Worlds, all which have acted diverse things exceeding the Powers of Nature, only by Demoniack Assistance.

If any one therefore shall pretend a Divine Commisſion, there are Three things which he ought to prove his Authority by : Miracles, Holineſs of Life, and a Doctrine worthy of God, and every way uſeful to Mankind. If he bring all theſe things, he is to be believed as ſent from God. But it no way comports with Divine Goodneſs and Veracity to bear witneſs to a Falſehood, or to expoſe men in things of the Greateſt moment to an Everlaſting and inevitable Deluſion.

Wherefore we are not only to look at Miracles, but at the Life and Doctrine of the Perſon who pretends them, to gain to himſelf the Belief of Divine Authority. To this purpoſe our Saviour made uſe of an invincible Argument againſt the *Phariſees*, who objected to him that he caſt out Devils by the help of the Prince of Devils, viz. *That a Kingdom divided againſt it ſelf is brought to deſolation* : Therefore ſince he both by his Doctrine, and the mighty works that he did, ſet himſelf wholly to pull down and overthrow the Kingdom of Satan, it could not be that he ſhould caſt out Devils by the Aſſiſtance of Satan. Therefore to make up a Right Judgment concerning a Divine Teſtimony, the matter it ſelf which is atteſted ought to come into Conſideration, which if it contain any thing contrary to the ſetled Principles of Nature, thoſe Miracles are not to be looked upon as Divine, but as Diabolical Deluſions. The *Beræans* were commended by the Spirit of God to be *more Noble then thoſe in Theſſalonica*, i.e. of a more ingenuous and pliable Temper, *in that they ſearched the Scriptures, whether thoſe things ſpoken by Paul and Silas were ſo*. Why ſhould not the ſame Commendation belong likewise to us, if we put to a ſevere Scrutiny & Trial whatever is deliver'd to us by any Perſon for a Divine Law ?

3. A third Argument may be drawn from the Nature of Religion, which ought to be matter of Choice

6r. and Delight. But now it is impossible that any one should please himself in that which is contrary to the Principles of his very Nature. And indeed to know Conclusions themselves, unless we likewise are ascertain'd from what Principles they flow, yields but a slender Delight to the Understanding: As the Pleasure of a Mathematical *Genius* results, not from having *Geometrical* Problems as undoubted *Axioms* by Heart, but from the being able to comprehend their *Demonstrations* deduced by a long *Series* of Propositions. Wherefore it is most agreeable to the Divine Goodness so far to indulge and have regard to the Nature of Man under the Gospel, that he may find the Harmony and Agreement of those things with Reason, which are propounded to him as Objects of Faith. For here lies the Principal Difference between Mankind and Brutes, in their being capable of Religion. And it is a thing abhorrent from all Reason, that that which is most Natural, and the sole Propriety of Man, should yet be contradictory to his own Faculties. Can it be imagined that God intended to perplex Humane Intellect with inexplicable subtleties? Or is any thing the more excellent and Venerable, because it exceeds all Understanding? Is he to be deemed the fittest subject for Religion, who is most Bigotical and carelessly credulous? Are we to put off Humane Nature that we may become Religious? Surely to entertain the least suspicion of such a thing were the very Reproach of all Religion: Such ought to be every Man's Judgment of his Religion, that it contain nothing in it absurd, unbecoming, or Repugnant to Right Reason; for what a shame were it for Religion to be afraid of the Tribunal of Reason? I have always looked upon that Religion most worthy of my choice, which comes off Victorious when called to the Bar of strictest Reason. Wherefore should a Gracious God

God bestow upon us the Faculty of Reason, if we must not suffer it to do its Office when our concern is most in Question? Or what other Faculty is there left by whose conduct we can search into the Truth of Religion? If we once forsake the Guidance of Reason must not all Religion be owing either to Education, Superstition or some Fanatical Impulse?

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But you will say, our Reason since the Fall is too much darkned, and therefore we are not competent Judges of Divine things.

But are the faint and more languishing Rays of the declining Sun therefore contemptible, and to be reputed Darkness, because we are deprived of his Meridian and more Exalted Light? Must he whose Eyes are somewhat dull, be therefore accounted stark blind? Or must we quite shut our Eyes, because they want the sharpness and Perspicacity of Eagles?

Is not Religion of such a Nature as requires our greatest Care and Diligence, as of a thing of the highest moment, and in which to have erred were our greatest Infelicity? And to what Purpose were our Faculties given, if they be of no use in those things wherein we most need them? Shall another Judge for us? Or shall the Understanding of another direct my will? Shall I see with other mens Eyes? Or walk only by the light that another carries before me? Shall I mortifie my irregular Affections with Arguments that I do not understand? Or govern my life by the measure of another Man's Principles? Are not all these things to be done by a Man's own proper Judgment, Intellect and Light? And can this be effected without the use of Reason? Nay further, is there need of any other Faculty in the choice of Religion, and such Principles as tend to the Regulation of Life, but only of Reason? Religion

63 Religion is a free and ingenuous thing, that forceth none, but Captivates the Understanding with its own solitary Beauty & Pulchritude. And he that thinks otherwise falsely accuses Religion & introduces Superstition into its Place.

4. A Fourth Argument I take from the Nature of Right Reason; from whence arises a clear Demonstration, that no Divine Revelation can be contrary to it. For the Souls of Men are derived from the Divine Mind, and Right Reason is of a Celestial Original, framed after the Image of Uncreated Wisdom and Knowledge. It is a certain Beam or Ray of the Intellectual Sun, bearing the Resemblance of Primigenial light. For Divine Wisdom is nothing else but a steady Comprehension of the Idea's of Things, together with those Reasons, Affections, and Mutual Relations whether of Concord or Discord, which Immediately flow from the Nature of Things themselves, as Relations *posito fundamento & termino*. And the Divine Intellect does intimately penetrate and behold at one view these Affections together with the Idea's of the Things themselves and discerns their Order and Reciprocations. Now what is this but fixed and stable Reason looking upon the Reasons and Connections of all things at once, and as it were with an Unmoved Eye? Whose express and accurate Resemblance is Right Reason engraven on Humane Minds, which though it cannot know and lay open all things, and their respective Reasons, by one single Act, yet it explicates and unfolds them successively and in order. Moreover, we have a clear and distinct Perception of the Consent or Discrepancy of so many of these Idea's and Reasons as we have an Entire and Comprehensive view of, and accordingly undertake either the Probation or Refutation of one from another. Wherefore Humane Reason does truly imitate

imitate and express Divine Wisdom, with this only Difference, that what she comprehends at once with one single Act, Reason deduces by many and operose Consequences.

That God should therefore reveal any thing contrary to Right Reason, is alike impious as to suppose him to be a Liar, and to contradict the internal Conceptions of his own Wisdom. For Right Reason and Divine Wisdom give the same Judgment of things, and if Humane Understanding shall at any time determine otherwise, that must not be looked upon as the Fault of Reason, but of Ignorance. Therefore if any thing propounded under the Plausible Name of Divine Revelation shall seem to contradict Reason, I ought to suspect that I do not fully comprehend the meaning of it, and therefore must insist upon a further search, and resolve that God intended that to be believed, which should be most consonant to the Principles of Nature. Nevertheless I would not have Humane Understanding arrogate too much to it self, nor rashly attempt to condemn presently that which exceeds its Capacity. For if the chiefest Part of those things which are delivered and consigned by Divine Testimony, be worthy of God, and Consonant to our Faculties, as to other things we ought to yield an implicit Faith to Divine Revelations, though they seem otherwise to clash with Reason, yet to give our Assent to them, at least according to the sense of the Spirit of God, although what that is, we cannot yet so fully understand.

5. A Fifth and last Argument shall be drawn from the Nature of the Christian Religion it self. And first of all as to its Precepts, their Purity, sanctity and usefulness, both as to particular Persons, and also the Publick, are so clear to every attentive and considerative Man, that

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that it would be altogether superfluous to go about to evince their Agreement with Reason: More especially when the thing it self is so fully made good already by the learned Dr. *Hammond*. From hence it likewise follows, That the Promises and Comminations in Religion are extremely agreeable to Reason, forasmuch as they are a kind of Hedge and Security for the Precepts contain'd in it. And though these three Parts of Christianity do far excel, yet they are not wholly different from other Religions that have taken place in the World, especially among the wiser and more Philosophical Pagans, who set the Precepts of Morality at a high Pitch, and also held the Doctrine of Rewards and Punishments after this life. So that whatever may be said in Vindication of the Ancient Piety and Wisdom, may with greater Reason be spoken in behalf of Christian Religion. For even the most profane and Atheistical Wits upon reading the Holy Scriptures have confessed that they contain in them the most excellent Precepts of Piety and Virtue.

Therefore I shall choose rather to discourse briefly of Christianity under the Notion of a Determinate Religion different from all other, that its Conformity with Right Reason may from hence likewise be made apparent.

First, therefore, What can be thought more agreeable to Reason then that God should intrust some certain Person with the Office of teaching and instructing Mankind in the Discharge of their Duty to him, and to one another? For the Degenerate Offspring of *Adam* are hugely ignorant of their Duty (whence so many ridiculous Rites of Superstition have been observable throughout all Ages) and very much need a Teacher. And besides they are obstinately and wilfully bent upon the Lusts of the
Flesh,

Flesh, and for this Reason want such a Law-giver as
 may Cause a Veneration and Fear in them. And
 that this Legislator should be a Person of an unspotted
 and blameless life is very congruous, both that he may 70.
 be a Pattern and Example to us, and likewise beget a
 Reverence and Esteem of his Doctrine. That he 71
 should be conceived by the Power of the Holy Ghost in
 the Womb of a Virgin without the concurrence of Man,
 is an excellent provision for a higher Esteem and Valua-
 tion of his Person, being separated from Humane De-
 filements, and the Ordinary Course of Nature. That
 he should be intimately united to the Divine Nature,
 and so truly and properly God, adds the greater Majesty 72
 to what he should deliver. Nor could God signifie his 73.
 will in a way more agreeable to the Nature of Man ; for
 he cannot appear to us but under some Corporeal Veil ; 74.
 and what more fitting Mansion or Covering then our
 Flesh ? Why may not God make use of some one of us
 (as the Soul doth of the Body) as an Instrument by whose
 Intervention he may discover his Mind to us ? Here is
 nothing either Contrary to Reason or hard to be under-
 stood. For why should the Conjunction of the Deity
 with the Nature of Christ more trouble the Understand-
 ing then the Union of the Soul with the Body ? For the
 higher and more exalted Nature any thing is of, with
 the greater Facility may it insinuate and derive it
 self. But though this Person be so Illustrious, yet it
 seems Reasonable that in reference to this Bodily life
 he should be of mean Quality and obscure Condition, ob-
 noxious to the same Evils and Infirmities, to which we our
 selves are exposed : For so we shall have mighty Incen-
 tives to the Love of God, and Patient bearing of Affli-
 ctions, when we see the most Innocent Captain of our
 Salvation, suffer so much upon our Account. Besides,
 that

that it is an Argument of the greatest Trust and Confidence in our Lord and Saviour, who being himself made perfect through sufferings, knows how to succour and relieve those that are oppressed under them. Moreover we may reasonably expect that God should give us some greater certainty of Eternal and Immortal life, then what was found among the Heathen, who spake very doubtfully of it; as likewise that we should be more fully assured of the Resurrection of the Body, without which the Happiness of Man cannot be Compleat: And how ready God is to Pardon Sinners upon a true Faith and Repentance; for this we are apt to doubt of when we consider the Malignity of Sin, our own proneness to Revenge, and how rare a thing it is to find forgiveness of a fault amongst men. In like manner, that he should establish the Belief of Rewards and Punishments after this life; that by looking up to those we may be allured to Obedience, and out of fear of these may be deterred from sin. And that he should gain credit to all these things both by his Miracles, and by his Death: For Miracles are the greatest Testimony of Divine Presence. And in that he yielded himself up to Death, it is a Great sign of the Truth and Sincerity of his dealing with us. Besides, It is a clear Demonstration of the Divine Goodness towards us, who spared not his own Son that he might do us good. Nor can there be a stronger Argument to move us to Crucifie our Lusts, and to lay down our lives for the Brethren. But that our Lord by his Death became a Sacrifice for sins, by which God declared his Placableness, it was a design of Infinite Wisdom and Goodness to relieve and succour the Soul under the Arguments of Despondency and Distrust, which it fetcht against it self from the Holiness and Justice of God, the Death of
Christ

Christ for that very End propitiating Divine Justice. His Resurrection from the Dead is likewise very Consonant to Reason, being an Ample Confirmation of his past Actions, and also a Demonstration of the Possibility of our Resurrection and Return to Life after Death. But that after his Resurrection he was exalted at the Right hand of God, and that all Prayers and Praises should be offered to God by his Mediation, and that he always makes Intercession for us, this is likewise very agreeable to Reason : For hence God not only makes known to us his kindness and Good-will, but has placed our Brother at his Right hand, a Person most dear to him, and most tenderly affected towards us, through whom we may with cheerfulness and full trust make our approach to God ; Christ in the mean while deprecating God in our behalf, that we should acknowledge whatever Good befalls us to proceed wholly and purely from the love of God. And then in that all Power both in Heaven and Earth is committed into his hands, and that he is Gods Vice-gerent, and the Head of Saints and Angels, it is a great Comfort to us, because it is he that so dearly loves us who is possesst of such mighty Power. Moreover since there is without Dispute a certain Polity and Government among the Blessed Saints and Angels, whom can we imagine to have better and greater Right to this Principality than Jesus Christ, who is God clothed with Humane Nature? And that both Devils and Men are sometime to be summon'd before the dreadful Tribunal of God, is very Consistent ; for this very thought will strike Terror into the most daring Sinner, and the Solemnity of the Judgment will vindicate God from all Suspicion of Malignity and Injustice, because every Man's Conscience will testify to him that his Misery proceeds from his own

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wretched

26.

wretched Folly. Nor can any thing be imagined more proper then that Christ should be appointed Judge ; for since God cannot execute this solemn Judgment but under a visible shape , what fitter Instrument can there be for this Purpose, then that very Nature in which long ago he has taken up his dwelling ? And lastly, 'tis no way discrepant from Reason, that having subdued all his Enemies, he should deliver up the Kingdom to his Father ; For his Mediatory Office being designed to this Purpose, that lapsed Man may be recovered to the Life of God, and invested with endless Happiness ; upon the perfecting this work, the Determination of his Kingdom ought to follow. Which yet is to be understood after this manner, *viz.* That Jesus Christ, God-Man shall from thence, and for ever continue the Prince and Head of Saints and Angels. Thus we have briefly run through the several Heads of Christian Religion, and shall not further trespass upon your Patience.

What remains I shall dispatch in a Word. From what hath been already said it appears clearly indecorous and unworthy of a Christian to draw in his Religion with his Mothers Milk, and to attribute his receiving it, not to the Ingenuous Disquisition of Reason, but to the Laws of his Country, his Education, to the Dictates of some learned Man in whom he has an Implicit Faith, and such like Prejudices as these. And in Conclusion, makes it his whole business pertinaciously to defend it, not upon a due choice and discernment between Truth and Falshood, but upon some preconceived and prejudicate Opinion. Whereas that is scarce worthy the Name of Faith, nor grateful to God, which owes its Original rather to some dull chance, then either to the Evidence of the thing it self, or the weight of the Arguments for it. Nay certain it is, that he who after

an humble, pious, and attentive weighing of Things shall yet fall into Error, is upon better grounds to be judged if not worthy of Praise, yet at least of Pardon, then he that shall blindly and fortuitously assent, though to Truth it self. To which the Holy Writings bear witness, by commanding us to *search the Scriptures; to prove all things; and to examine and try the Spirits:* And as our Apostle exhorts us, *to be ready always to give an answer to every Man that asks us a Reason of the hope that is in us.*

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Joh. 5. 39.

1 Thes. 5. 21.

1 Joh. 4. 1.

The End.

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ANNOTATIONS

Upon the foregoing

DISCOURSE.

THe Pious and Excellently learned Author of this Discourse, being himself so Great a Master of Reason, made it his whole Business to employ his Great Parts for the Honour and Advantage of Religion. He was a well instructed Scribe for the Kingdom of Heaven, and as a Faithful Steward of the Mysteries of God, brought forth out of his Treasures things New and Old. And finding Christianity attackt and assaulted by Deists and Enthusiasts, he resolutely came in to her Aid and Assistance, and by invincible Arguments hath made Good both the use of Reason in Matters of Religion, and that Christianity contains nothing in it contrary to the Laws and Inscriptions of Right Reason. Upon this Foundation the whole Discourse is settled and grounded, on which I here offer such Annotations as may best serve to illustrate and confirm that high Sense and great Reason our Ingenious Author hath curiously and with most accurate Judgment drawn together.

26. Pag. 3, 4. *What ever is propounded to us as matter of Belief, ought not so much as to be above Reason.*] There are some who out of Stupidity rather than a due Veneration

tion of Religion, make the choicest of its Articles so incomprehensible as to be elevated above Reason, that is, in their sense, such as of which Humane Intellect can have no Conception : Then which certainly nothing can be more derogatory to that Sacred Oeconomy, which the Eternal ^{Logos} the Son of God hath set on foot, nor give greater Ground to the bold Cavils and Pretensions of Enthusiasts and disguised Atheists. As if there were no other design in the Christian Religion but to amuze and puzzle Humane Understandings, by propounding a Company of intricate and perplexed Riddles, of which we can have no Apprehension, but must believe them merely because they are unintelligible. For certain it is, that whatever is in its own Nature unconceivable can be no Object of Humane Understanding, and consequently can be no Object of Faith. And it were a vain and ridiculous Thing to tell us that God reveals unconceivable Mysteries to us, to convince us of our Emptiness and Nothingness : For Christian Religion makes its ultimate End to be the Perfection of Humane Nature; Now that which is wholly and absolutely above Reason is likewise unintelligible, and what is so, can in no sense be said to advance and better the Faculties of Man, and perfect his Nature. 'Tis true, in this sense, and in no other, we may admit a thing to be above Reason, that is (as our excellent Author speaks) *because bare Intellect could not light upon it.* For the whole Frame and Contexture of Christianity shews a Wisdom exceeding that of Angels as well as Men, but yet now it is manifested and revealed to us, there is nothing in it unconceivable, nor any one Article beyond the Power of a Rational Soul to have, though not a full, yet a clear and distinct Idea of. The very Notion of God implies *Incomprehensibility* in it, yet notwithstanding,

withstanding a Rational Mind may have a very evident and clear Conception of his Nature. And that which dazzles our Eyes with such an amazing lustre in Christianity, that is, the Doctrine of the Trinity, was not thought either unintelligible or irrational by the wisest and most learned Pagans, though such is the Profoundness of the Mystery, that Humane Understanding could never have fall'n upon any such Thing without a Divine Revelation. Therefore what the best of the Pagans discoursed of it, was but a Communication of that Doctrine which had been received by Tradition from the first Ages of the World, and was made known to them by Supernatural Revelation. The same we may say of all other Mysterious Points in the Christian Religion, that being revealed, they bear a pleasing and agreeable Harmony with our Reasons, and do intimately correspond with something in our own Minds.

26.

Pag. 4. *This Obscurity is not a little subservient to beget and conciliate Reverence and Esteem to the Christian Doctrine.*] The Christian Religion has this in Common with all other Mysteries, that it hath a Veil drawn over its more recondite and hidden Doctrines, partly that it may not be prophaned and exposed to contempt by every common Eye; and partly to whet and sharpen the Industry of Capacious Minds to a diligent search and inquisition after such inestimable Treasures. For as the *Initiati* in the Mysterious Rites both of *Greeks* and *Egyptians*, were first to undergo a due Purification of themselves before they were admitted to the Presence and Fraition of the worshipped Deity; so does Christian Religion declare its end to be the perfecting Humane Souls, and at last conducting them by an orderly Purification both of Body and Mind into the Sacred Adytum

Adytum to enjoy the Presence of God in the highest Heavens for evermore. Hence Christianity as it is a Mystery, so in opposition to the prophane Rites of the Heathen worship, it is *ἐνσέβειας μυστηρίου*, a Mystery of Godliness, 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. and *ἡ κατ' ἐνσέβειαν διδασκαλία*, a Doctrine according to Godliness, 1 *Tim.* 6. 3. And it is very decorous and becoming the Wisdom of God, to hide and conceal the choice Doctrines of Christianity as precious Treasures, behind a Cloud, that they may not be the too easie Purchase of every dissolute Person, and that Religion it self may not be contemned and disesteemed by supposing it to have nothing Venerable and excellent in it. But as the Spectators at the foot of the Hill behold no greater Beauty and Comeliness in the Face of our Saviour then in other men, but when he ascended the Mount his Countenance appear'd to those that were capable, with a Brightness and Lustre far surpassing that of the Sun: Thus it is with his Doctrine; while we converse only below, and our Eyes are filled with Dust, and our Minds swell'd with the Lusts and Vanities of the World, we see no more Excellency and Beauty to command our Veneration and love in Christianity then in other things: But if we would ascend up to the top of the Mount by a due Purification of our Spirits, by Mortification of our irregular Appetites and by Assimilation of our Minds to God, we should behold admirable Glories, and be enravished with the Pulchritude of the transfigur'd Face of Jesus. For the *Secret of the Lord is only with them that fear him.* Psal. 25. 14.

Pag. 5. *There is a certain Person who asserts the Reasons of Things to be contingent and arbitrary.* 27
 The Person intended here was *Szydlovius* who in a Treatise intituled, *Vindiciæ Quæstionum aliquot difficilium & controversarum in Theologia*, printed at *Franeker*, among other

other things lays down such Positions as these, *Quæritur (inquit) An detur aliquid antecedenter bonum ad Voluntatem Dei : Sive, An res sint idèo justæ & bonæ quia Deus eas vult, vel, An idèo eas velit quia justæ sint ? Negatur dari aliquid antecedenter bonum ad voluntatem Dei, & Affirmatur Res idèo esse justas & bonas, quia eas Deus vult; non contra, idèo eas velle Deum quia Justæ & bonæ sint.* And afterwards he thus goes on, *Obiiciet quispiam: Ergo sic Deus poterit imperare Blasphemiam, Perjurium, Mendacium, &c. quod absurdum Videtur. Resp. Etiam in illis quæ ad cultum Dei pertinent, nullo alio modo homines obligantur nisi ex præcepto & per legem. Si enim Deus voluisset, tum potuisset alium Cultum vel modum Cultûs jubere sibi præstari. Itaq; etiam ista quæ ad Cultum suum pertinent, Deus liberrimè præcepit, & quidem ut potuerit aliter præcepisse: idèoq; ex Hypothesi tantum Mandati Divini ista sunt vitia. Et videtur hîc præsupponi, quasi Mendacium & Blasphemia afficiant Deum aliquo modo, quod prorsus falsum est. Certum igitur est Deum potuisse contrarium modum cultûs sibi jubere præstari.* Which execrable Positions our Author out of that tender and delicate sense he had of Truth, and mighty Zeal for the Honour of God, did justly detest and abominate, and therefore set himself to confute such Blasphemous Assertions as these in a short but exceeding Compact and Rational Discourse, which since his much lamented Death has been Published by the Title of *A Discourse of Truth*, and is now reprinted with another useful Discourse of an Ingenious Person with Annotations upon them both. To which for full satisfaction and Prosecution of the Heads here mentioned I refer. And shall only transcribe what I find concerning this Subject in a Philosophical Poem.

*If God do all things simply at his Pleasure,
 Because he will, and not because it's Good,
 So that his Actions will have no set measure;
 It's possible it should be understood
 What he intends: I feel that he is lov'd
 Of my dear Soul, and know that I have born
 Much for his sake; yet is it not hence prov'd
 That I shall live, though I do sigh and mourn
 To find his Face, his Creatures wish he'll slight & scorn.*

*When I breath out my utmost Vital Breath,
 And my dear Spirit to my God commend,
 Tet some foul Fiend close lurking underneath
 My serious, humble Soul from me may rend:
 So to the lower shades down we shall wend.
 Though I in Hearts simplicity expected
 A Better doom; sith I my steps did bend
 Towards the Will of God, and had detected
 Strong Hope of lasting Life, but now I am rejected.*

*Nor of well Being, nor Subsistency
 Of our poor Souls, when they do hence depart:
 Can any be assured, if liberty
 We give to such odd thoughts, that thus pervert
 The Laws of God, and rashly do assert
 That Will rules God, but Good rules not Gods will:
 What e're from Right, Love, Equity doth start,
 For ought we know then God may act that ill,
 Only to shew his Might, and his free Mind fulfil.*

Pag. 5, 6. That God should plant such Faculties in us
 as may then deceive us, when they most clearly and di-
 stinctly perceive their respective Objects, is contrary to the
 Divine Goodness and Veracity.]

'Tis true, if God were such an Arbitrary Being whose sole Will were the Rule and Measure of Goodness and Justice, as the forecited Author contends he is, it is utterly impossible we should have any certainty of the clearest Truth, not so much as that Three and Three make Six, because we can never be assured that this Arbitrary Omnipotent Deity did not purposely make the Frame of our Souls so, as that they should then be deceived when they have the clearest and most evident Perception of things. Therefore that Acute Philosopher *Des-Cartes* committed a great over-sight when he would have us doubt of the Truth of those Things whereof we have the clearest Evidence and Demonstration; because till we come to the Knowledge of a God we cannot be certain that our Faculties are not false and imposturous; for we have no way to come to the knowledge of God, but by our Faculties. And therefore this were, 1. To condemn us to an Eternal Scepticism from which there is no possibility of ever extricating our selves. 2. It is a Ridiculous way of Argumentation to prove the Truth of God's Existence from our Faculties of Reason and Understanding; and then to prove the Truth of those Faculties from the Existence of God. 3. There being nothing more Immediate to us, nor any thing whereby we can conclude more certainly a thing to be true then by our own Faculties, if the Truth of our Faculties is to be proved by any thing, it is evident, it is to be proved by our Faculties themselves, but this were also a ridiculous circular Demonstration, to prove the Truth of our Faculties, by the Truth of our Faculties. Whence it necessarily follows that we are only to suppose our Faculties to be true, it being Impossible for us to prove them to be so. But to be above this Pitch is the Privilege only of the Eternal Mind,

Mind, or of the $\delta \mu \nu \nu \theta \sigma \pi \alpha \rho \delta \varsigma \theta \epsilon \delta \varsigma$ the only wise God, as our Faculties if rightly cultivated suggest unto us, & the Apostle does admonish us. That therefore was the main slip in *Des-Cartes* that he was not content to suppose our Faculties to be true, but he would prove them to be so, when he was destitute of all Argument for it, but the Truth of the Faculties themselves. But some Philosophers bring the business to a closer pinch, as they conceive, by supposing the very Essence of Truth to be clear and distinct Perceptibility, insomuch that not Omnipotence it self, much less Casualty, can bring to pass that what is false should be clearly perceived to be. But these otherwise witty and learned Contemplators do not consider, That Truth is a Thing antecedent to Perceptibility, which respects the Perceptive Intellect, and is in it self nothing else (I mean Eternal Truths) but the necessary Coherence or Incoherence of the Terms of which the Truth it self doth consist. And therefore Perceptibility cannot be the Essence of Truth. I speak here of Truth in the Object, not in the Subject, as our Author has distinguished in his Ingenious Discourse of Truth; which no Intellect Perceptive or Conceptive makes, but finds in the Intellect *Exhibitive*, as his Annotator has also observed: Insomuch that the Divine Intellect it self *quatenus* Perceptive or Conceptive is not the Author of Archetipal Truth, but *quatenus Exhibitive*. Moreover, though clear and distinct Perceptibility were the very Essence of Truth, whenas indeed it is only a Relative Mode thereof, what is this to our Perceptive Faculty, till it come to a clear actual Perception, and what is this but a strong Cogitation that I clearly and distinctly perceive a thing? But that many have been mistaken when they have had such a strong Cogitation is indeed the known Disgrace of Speculati-

See Dr. More's
Vol. Philosoph.
Tom. 2. p. 161.

on and Philosophy. Whence it is manifest, when they say that Omnipotence it self cannot bring to pass that what is false should be clearly perceived to be, that the Word [*perceived*] is fallaciously abused, to a sense beyond the Capacity of the present Circumstances, as if it signified [really to find] when as it only signifies, strongly to think we clearly perceive a Thing to be. Which many have and yet have been in a mistake; and this by Casualty. What then cannot Omnipotence do in this kind, if it would? But supposing our Faculties to be true when all Moral diligence has been employed to fit them for use (and none but a Humorist will then call in to Question their Verdict, when they clearly discern a thing to be) the Existence of God and his Attributes being plain to us, we have a further Assurance, we having such an Author of our Being, that he gave not our Faculties to abuse us, but to inform us faithfully of all Truth necessary and useful for us, so that what is clear to them is really true. Which is the Assertion of this our Learned and Pious Writer without any *Cartesian* Fetches and *Ambages*. And lastly, we may note by way of Overplus, That clearness and distinctness of Perception in the Intellect Perceptive or Conceptive, is not the Right notion of Truth, but the Conformity of the Perception or Conception with the Thing conceived, which is Truth in the Object; and that therefore in false Opinions the Perception of the Intellect is not only obscure, but false, because it perceives or conceives otherwise than the Thing it self is, which is the true and universally acknowledged Notion of what is false in the conceiving of Things.

30. Pag. 8. *Our Reason would immediately have suggested to us that he was an Impostor and Deceiver.*] That God may permit an Impostor and Deceiver to work Miracles,

cles, we have the express Testimony of Holy Scripture, and the matter of Fact confirmed in the *Egyptian Sorcerers*, *Deut.* 13. 1, 2. *Moses* tells the *Israelites*, that if any Person should come in the Name of a Prophet, and should do a Miracle, if that Prophet should attempt by this to seduce them to Idolatry, then he was not to be believed, because God might suffer this in *Tentationem*, to prove their Faith and Belief in the true God. But on the other side, if a Prophet should come in the Name of God, and produce Miracles as the Credentials of Divine Authority and Commission, and should exhort them only to the Worship of the True God of *Israel*, than he ought to be believed. For this was the Sign or Note by which they should know a true Prophet from a false, *Deut.* 18. 21, 22. In like manner, We that are Christians, having the Law of Right Reason engraven in our Souls, ought to be as Cautious and Jealous of admitting Belief, though a Person should by Miracles seek to extort it from us, if under pretence of Divine Revelation he would introduce any thing contrary to clear and evident Reason. Because we may be assured that no such thing can be Authorized of God, but that if the Miracles are true and real, they are done in *Tentationem*. See *Annotat.* upon p. 14.

Page. 10. *We find most of these to have been actuated with an excess of Joy, and transported with a seemingly Divine fervor.*] How far a Natural Enthusiasm may Prevail upon men is evidently seen in the fresh Examples which every Age produces; and 'tis observable that those Sects among us which pretend most to Divine Inspiration, are most of all infected and agitated with Melancholy, which arising from the lower Region of the Body, and ascending in Copious Steams with the Blood

Blood and Spirits into the Brain, ferments like new Wine, and stains the Imagination with Variety of Phantasms and Impressions. And if this happen to a Devotional and Religious Temper whose understanding is not strong enough to discern the Illusions of Phantasie from the Dictates of the Spirit of God, it presently begets in him a strong and vigorous Conceit that he is Divinely acted and inspired. With which Delusion they are the more easily imposed upon, for want of a right Understanding of the Nature of the Prophetical Spirit, whose impulse and influence upon the Mind, though it were strong and vigorous, being *in the Heart as a burning Fire, shut up in the Bones*, which sensibly afflicted and pained till it received a Vent (as is expressed by the Prophet *Jeremy*, Chap. 20. 9.) yet it never altered nor clouded the Rational Faculty, but the Intellectual Light remained still free and undisturbed, nor did ever any Prophet when acted by Divine Inspiration deliver any Thing contrary to the fixed and Eternal Laws of Reason. Now the way to distinguish these Enthusiastical Impositions from Divine Influxes and Illuminations, is by comparing them with the known and infallible Dictates of Right Reason; for no Truth delivered by Divine Revelation is ever contrary or contradictory to the Rational Faculties of Mankind. He that would know more of the Effects of this Natural Enthusiasm may consult that Excellent Treatise of Dr. More, intituled *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus*.

34.

Pag. 12. *So long as that brisk and lively relish of sensual Pleasures draws away the Mind, it will not be at leisure to attend to the soft Whispers of that Gentle Monitor within.*] There is in the Soul of Man a double Nature, Intellectual and Animal, which the Scripture calls by the Name of *Flesh and Spirit*, or the *ὁ σῶς* and *ὁ ψῶς* αἰθεράκιος,

ἄνθρωπος, the inner and outer Man. And according to
 this double Capacity, the Respective Objects are like-
 wise different : The *Animal* Nature or Outer Man
 dictates the τὸ ἡδὺ what is pleasant or profitable in the
 Groffest sense, and is only that blind and irrational Ap-
 petite which results from the Souls Union and Conjun-
 ction with the Body. With reference to this the Apostle
 says, 1 *Joh. 2. 16. All that is in the World, the Lust of*
the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, is
not of the Father, but of the World: i. e. These are the
 Gratifications of the Mundane Life or Animal Nature,
 and about such things as these the Corporeal life is per-
 petually conversant as with its proper Objects. But
 now the Intellectual Nature or Inner Man takes for its
 Object the τὸ δεόν what ought to be done, being ruled
 and guided by the Counsels and Inspirations of Right
 Reason. Now because the Soul cannot attend to two
 different Faculties or Capacities at the same time in their
 highest actings and Invigorations, it follows that upon
 the Prevalency and Enlargement of either of them, the
 other is sensibly diminished, abated, and debilitated.
 For who is there that sees not how crazed and besot-
 ted those Persons are in their Intellectuals, who let
 themselves loose to the conduct of their irregular Lusts
 and Appetites, and plunge their Souls without bounds
 or measures in Corporeal Joys ? So that were it not for
 their External shape, there would be little difference be-
 tween them and Brutes. And is it possible now to dis-
 cern the faint and weak glimmerings of Intellectual Light
 through such profound and clammy darkness ? Nay, it is
 very easie to conceive that the Rampancy and Luxurian-
 cy of the Animal Life may arise to such a height as to
 form an Extraordinary and thick *Cortex* over the Intel-
 lectual or Divine Principle, that its actings should ne-

ver be perceptible any more, but like the Central Fire in an incrustated Star, be totally extinguished at the long run. Of so high a Concernment is it to Mankind to mortifie and subdue the irregular Excursions of this Plastick or Animal Life, and stifle its *ἄλογα πάθη* irrational and blind Appetites in the *Embryo* or first rudimental Efformations. For the flush eruption and blazing of the Corporeal life, is a sad Presage of the Death and Extinction of the Diviner Faculties. And Death it self in a Physical sense is only the Consoption, or laying asleep some Powers that others may awake in their stead: Hence the Spirit of God affirms that those who live in pleasures, *i. e.* licentiously and delicately, omitting no opportunities of gratifying that worser Life to which they have so tender a Regard, *are dead while they live.* To this purpose is that of *Plotinus, Ennead.*

1 Tim. 5. 6.

1. 1. 8. ἀποθνήσκει σὺ, ὡς ψυχὴ ἀνθρώπου. καὶ ὁ θάνατος αὐτῆς ἐστὶ ἐν τῷ σώματι βέλαντιον, ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐστὶ κατὰ τὴν αἰσθητικὴν φύσιν αὐτῆς. A vicious Person dies after that manner the Soul is capable of dying; and the Death of the Soul is by a total *Immersion* and *repletion* of it self with Corporeity.

34

Ibid. We are led by sense, either External or Internal, not by dry and inspid Reason.] It is no Part of the Authors Design to prove that bare and dry Reason is a sufficient Criterion to discern the true and affecting relish of Heavenly Things; for as there is some Principle in us which has a Vital sense and sapid Gust of Corporeal Joys and Pleasures, so there is a Principle likewise in the Soul of Man, which is *ὑπὲρ τὸν νοῦν*, something better then Reason, and which a *Platonist* would call *ὡς ἄνθος* the Flower and Summity of the Mind, when by due Purification of its self from all Corporeal Dregs and Pollutions, it arises to such a Measure of Participation of the Divine Life,

as that it perceives a Generous Relish, and Grateful, and affecting Pleasure in Holiness and Virtue. For till this inward Intellectual Sense be in some Good measure awakened, Religion it self does but very little, and weakly affect the Mind. Therefore our Author adds, *That heavenly Things are not otherwise to be known, but by such an inward relish and affecting light as Divine Grace usually imparts to defecate and humble Minds.* And a little above he says, *That to render our selves Obedient to the Will of our heavenly Father, is the only plain and easy way to the attaining a true knowledge and vital Sense of Divine Revelations.* Consonant to what our Saviour himself expressly affirms, *Joh. 7. 17. If any Man will do the Will of God, he shall know of the Doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self, i. e.* The true relish and vital sense of Religion arises from a Conformity of Mind with the Will of God. So that though Reason may furnish a Man with sufficient Arguments to assure him of the Truth of Religion, yet the sapid gust and affecting sense of it flows from the Experfection of the Intellectual Powers into a Divine life.

Ibid. To admonish them that are going astray, to illuminate the Eyes of the Mind, to strengthen the Faith, and to fix and impress the Argument of Godliness upon the Soul, these and such like Things we owe to the benign Influence of the Holy Spirit. It is a very great Indication of a Malicious Mind, or weak and crazy Intellectuals, when Men shall load and burden their Adversaries with the opprobrious and Invidious Term of Heresie, as denying the Aid & Assistance of the Spirit of God to be Necessary, when they only endeavour to make the Mystry of our Faith, the Oeconomy of Christian Religion to appear in all its Parts Rational, i. e. worthy and becoming of its Author the Eternal Wisdom of God. It has been

the ill Fortune of some Eminent and Ingenious Persons of late to be traduced for *Pelagians*, *Saciniars*, and what not, for no other cause that I know of, but because they speak sense, and care not to explicate Religion by unintelligible Words and Phrases, quaint Allusions and odd Similitudes, but instead of all this jingling noise, they appeal to the Common and Rational Faculties of all Mankind. And in this they are so far from laying aside or rendring useless the Aid of the Holy Spirit of God under the Gospel, that they freely acknowledge all their strength to derive from his ever-blessed Influence, that of themselves they are nothing, but that it is he who works in them both to will and to do; and that he is not only the beginner, but Finisher of every good work. Although perhaps they may not think the Operation of the Spirit of God to be by an Omnipotent Power at large, but *Hypothetical*, and upon certain Terms and Conditions; like the great Formative Power in Nature, which produces not the Lineaments and Primigenial Rudiments of the Body of a Plant or Animal out of a Flint, but requires a pliable Ductility and Sequaciousness in the Matter it works upon.

36.

Pag. 14. Pythagoras, Apollonius Tyanæus who endeavoured by Magick Art to keep up the Credit of sinking Idolatry, was famous for Miracles.] That Miracles may be wrought by wicked Persons for ill ends and designs, is evident not only from the Prediction before cited, *Deut.* 13. as also from the Miracles wrought by the *Egyptian* Magicians to invalidate those of *Moses*, but likewise from the express Prophecie of our Saviour himself concerning false Prophets that should arise and shew σημεῖα μεγάλα καὶ τέρατα great signs and wonders, to deceive, if possible, even the Elect. And the Apostles of our Lord Jesus foretelling the coming of Antichrist, describe

scribe it to be κατ' ἐνέργειαν τοῦ σατανᾶ, ἐν πλὴν δυνάμει, καὶ σημείοις, καὶ τέρασιν, after the efficacy of Satan, with all Power, and Signs, and Wonders [or Miracles] of a Lye. ^{2 Theff. 2. 9.} And St. John speaking of the same Person, says that he shall do μεγάλα σημεῖα Great Wonders, and deceive them that dwell on the Earth, by the means of those Miracles ^{Rev. 13. 13, 14.} which he has Power to do in the sight of the Beast. Now from hence we may collect these things. 1. That true Miracles may be wrought by wicked Persons; not that God does immediately concur by his Almighty Power, in assisting them to do Miracles to countenance Falsehoods, and the open Violation of his Laws, but that he may permit invisible created Spirits to exert their Energy and Power in producing Supernatural Effects: Whence we have no Reason to think that the Miracles, foretold to be done by Antichrist and his Followers, or by false Prophets to be mere Juggles and Delusions of our Senses, but that some of them may be real Miracles, but because they are wrought to confirm Idolatry, and to establish such Doctrines as are plainly repugnant to the Rational Faculties of Mankind, therefore we are not to heed them, but to look upon them as τέρατα ψεύδους, Miracles of Falshood, and a Lye. And of this sort were the Miracles of Apollonius, who though he might dazzle the Eyes of some by the Glittering Brightness of his Counterfeit Virtues (it being for the Interest of the Devils Kingdom that he should act that part well) yet he never transcended the bounds of the Animal life, but was an Archi-mago or Grand Magician, as Merageneas, ^{Origen. contr. Cell. 6.} who wrote his life, testifies. 2. That God never permits false Prophets to do Miracles by the Assistance of evil Demons, but only in the Case of such Falshoods as are clearly discoverable by the Light of Nature or common Dictates of Universal and Right Reason; because

if he should, it would be an Invincible Temptation : But (as our Author speaks a little below) *it no way comports with Divine Goodness and Veracity to bear witness to a falshood, or to expose men in things of the greatest moment to an everlasting and inevitable Delusion.* 3. That Miracles alone are not a sufficient Confirmation of the Divinity of a Doctrine, forasmuch as they have been wrought by Pagans, and the same is asserted by *Busbequius* of some among the *Turks*; therefore besides Miracles, to perfect and compleat a Divine Testimony, there is required Holiness of life in the Person that pretends a Divine Mission, and a Doctrine worthy of God, and every way useful to Mankind. Hence our Author adds, *p. 15. That to make up a right Judgment concerning a Divine Testimony the matter it self which is attested ought to come into consideration, which if it contain any thing contrary to the settled Principles of Nature, those Miracles are not to be looked upon as Divine, but as Diabolical Delusions.* Therefore for the Writers of the *Romish* Church to pretend Miracles now, and to rank them among the Essential Characters to prove the Truth of a Church by, as *Bellarmino* does, when all men whose Eyes are open, discover the greatest part of those Miracles to be the Frauds and Impostures of cunning Priests, or if they were true, it being evident that they are wrought by Apostate Spirits for the Confirmation of such Doctrines as are clearly repugnant to the settled Principles of Right Reason, it is, (1.) To hazard and call in Question the Truth of those Miracles wrought by Christ and his Apostles for the Confirmation of Christianity. And (2.) to use the Words of a learned Man of our own, 'If any strange things have been done in that Church, they prove nothing but the Truth of Scripture, which foretold that
'Gods

‘ (God’s Providence permitting it, and the Wickedness
 ‘ of the World deserving it) strange Signs and Won-
 ‘ ders should be wrought to confirm false Doctrine, that
 ‘ they which love not the Truth should be given over
 ‘ to strong Delusions. So that now we have Reason
 ‘ rather to suspect and be afraid of pretended Miracles
 ‘ as signs of false Doctrine, then much to regard them
 ‘ as certain Arguments of Truth. Neither is it strange
 ‘ that God should permit some true Wonders to be done,
 ‘ to delude those who have forged so many Wonders, to
 ‘ deceive the World.

Pag. 15. *Here lies the Principal Difference between Mankind and Brutes in their being capable of Religion.* 38
 That the Essential Difference between Mankind and Brutes does not lie solely and purely in Rationality, appears from hence, in that Brutes are capable of Reason, though in a lower Degree. And moreover we can frame a very Intelligible Idea of such Creatures as are capable of Reason so as to build Cities, and to Form and Institute Common-wealths, which yet have no Distinction of moral Good and Evil, and consequently are neither capable of rewards nor punishments ; and perhaps some such Animals may be actually existent in some part or other of the World. But that which constitutes the true difference between Men and Brutes is Religion, which the Satyrist took notice of,

————— *Separat hæc nos*
A grege matorum, atq; ideo venerabile soli
Sortiti ingenium divinorumq; capaces.

Juvenal.
Sat. 15.

Pag. 16. *If we once forsake the guidance of Reason,* 39.
must not all Religion be owing either to Education, Super-
stition, or some Fanatical Impulse ?] To him that for-
 takes the Conduct of Right Reason all Religions are
 alike,

alike, and he may as well be a *Mahametan* or *Jew* as a *Christian*, and indeed that he has any Religion at all, is owing chiefly to his Education, and the Laws of the Country wherein he lives. But Religion being a matter of choice, there must be some standing and settled Rule by which to try and judge the Truth or Falseness, the Congruity or Incongruity of it : And such a Rule as this God has furnished Mankind withal, namely Right Reason, and he that having means and opportunity to try and examine the Religion that is propounded to him as Matter of his Choice, shall yet carelessly content himself with it, because he has been educated and trained up in it, has his Understanding given him to no purpose, and may justly fear as a Punishment of this his careless Oscitancy and slothful Credulity, that Providence should permit him to swallow great and dangerous Errors as well as Truth. For he that believes without Reason declares himself indifferent to believe any thing right or wrong. *Socrates* gives this Commendation of *Cebes*, that he was careful to inquire into all things, and duly weigh them *ὅτι ἂν τις ἐπιποιοί*, and would not presently believe that which any Body said, though otherwise he had sufficient respect unto him. I shall subjoin what an excellent Writer speaks to this Purpose: 'We ought not (says he) to surrender our belief to any thing carelessly ; nor, either out of idleness and sloth, or being overawed by the Confidence which any men assume to themselves, content our selves with an Implicit Faith : Neglecting to search and try, and prove all Things which demand to have no less then our Souls resigned up unto them. We ought therefore to suspect those who would have us believe them without putting our selves to the trouble of much search. It is a sign they mean

mean to deceive; for if God himself does not expect to be believed, unless there be Good witnesses for that to which his Ambassadors demand Assent; why should men be so presumptuous as to ask us to believe them blindly? Or why should we be such Obedient Fools, as to do more for them than God would have us do for himself? He has given us Eyes, and therefore we ought to look about us, especially when Men bid us wink and take any thing upon trust. He has endued us with Reason, and therefore we ought to sift, and try, and examine that which is propounded to us. And if any Body say, Do not try, nor examine; you are not able to discern the Differences of things; Believe as we teach, for we cannot deceive you: Mark that Man or Company of Men as the greatest Deceivers, who intend to impose something upon you, which will not abide the Test.

Page. 17. *Religion is a free and ingenuous Thing, that forceth none, but Captivates the Understanding with its own solitary Beauty and Pulchritude.*] The Soul of Man being the Workmanship of the Eternal $\Delta\gamma\omega$ or Wisdom of God, and coming into the World furnished with the Seeds and Principles of all true Wisdom and Knowledge, however its Lapse and Degeneracy have clouded and darkened its Intellectual Faculties, yet there still remaining such a Cognation and Harmony between it and Truth, she cannot but embrace it whenever duly and advantageously proposed. Now Christian Religion being likewise the Genuine Offspring of that Wisdom which has left such visible Characters and Signatures of it self upon the whole Frame of Heaven and Earth, the Soul of Man presently discovers all the Beautiful Emanations of it to be Congenerous and Homogeneous to its own Intellectual Light, and as all like
is.

is attractive of its like, is gently and willingly captivated, and sweetly drawn as with some hidden strings to a closer and nearer union with it. And this is the Reason why Christianity neither needs, nor uses Violence or Force to beget Belief and Entertainment in Humane Minds, because it is made up only of such Things as intimately Correspond with the Intellectual Frame and Furniture of the Soul. Nor indeed (supposing Religion to contain any thing contrary to Right Reason) could Men ever be forced to believe it : For such is the Constitution of a Rational Soul, and such are the Essential Impresses of its Intellectual Nature, that no Man can believe what he pleases, but is fatally bound up to such Things as are agreeable to those Principles of which his Rational Nature is compounded. And if it were in the Power of any Man to believe any thing though never so contradictory and repugnant to the Natural Sentiments and Impressions of his own Mind, he might then yield as firm an Assent to Falshood as Truth, and repute all the Contradictions and Absurdities in the World to be infallible Oracles. And as he cannot arbitrarily fix his Mind to the Reception of a Falshood, so neither of that which is irrational ; for that which is Repugnant to Right Reason is certainly false, and all the Difference between them lies only in the Number of Syllables.

41.

Pag. 18. *Right Reason and Divine Wisdom give the same Judgment of things.*] The Foundation of all Knowledge whether Divine or Humane lies in the Apprehension of the Idea's, Natures and mutual Respects and Relations of things ; Now these not being Arbitrary, but settled, Eternally fixt and Immutable, it clearly follows that Right Reason and Divine Wisdom give the same Judgment of Things. Forasmuch as not only
Right

Right Reason is a Participation of the Divine Understanding, but likewise, that it is no more in the Power of God to change or alter the Idea's, Respects, and References of Things, then it is in his Power to die, or destroy his own Being. Hence a Triangle with its three Angles equal to two Right ones, and all Idea's with their Immuta- ble Respects, and Habitues, appear the same in Humane Understanding as they are Represented and Exhibited in the Divine Intellect; because our Understanding is an Abstract or Copy of the Di- vine Understanding; as likewise because the con- trary would undermine and destroy the very Founda- tion of all Knowledge in the World. There-
 fore it was truly asserted by Tully, *Est igitur, quoniam nihil est Ratione melius, eaq; & in homine & in Deo, prima homini cum Deo Rationis Socie- tas: Inter quos autem Ratio, inter eosdem etiam Recta Ratio communis est.* Nor do we by this in a Stoical Arrogance make Man equal with God, as some may fondly imagine: For the Divine Intellect (as our learned Author speaks) doth intimately penetrate and behold at one view these Affections with the Idea's of the things themselves, and discerns their Order and Reciprocations. And this is properly called fixed and Stable Reason; whereas Humane Understanding explicates and unfolds things suc- cessively and in order, and this is Reason in suc- cession, or flowing and moveable Reason.

L. 1. de leg.

Pag. 41. *As to other Things we ought to yield an Implicit Faith to Divine Revelation, &c.*]
 Christian Religion sufficiently obtains its end, in that all those things which pertain to Life and God-

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linefs

finest, to the Renovation of Mens Minds into the faultless Image of our Lord Jesus, are plain and intelligible even to the meanest Capacity ; but in such things as are of a more Abstruse, Profound, and Speculative Nature, it is sufficient to have an Implicit Faith, *i. e.* to believe that the sense of all those Things that are delivered and consign- ed by Divine Testimony, though they transcend my Capacity, whatever it is which was intended by God, is true. For he that does not so, calls God's Truth in Question. But to believe this or that to be the true sense of them, or to believe the Modes of such and such Doctrines which are not plainly revealed in the Holy Scriptures, are thus to be explicated, and all other Explications of them utterly false, is not necessary either to Faith or Salvation. For if God would have had under Pain of Damnation those Doctrines which are not so plainly laid down, as that all should have the same Conceptions of them, to be equally believed by all in this Particular and Determinate sense, it could not consist with his Wisdom to deliver them in obscure Terms, nor with his Justice to require of Men to know certainly the meaning of those Words which he himself has not revealed.

43 Lib. 4. c. 24.

Pag. 43. *That he may be a Pattern and Example to us.* 'For (as *Lactantius* speaks excellently well.) *Quomodo poterit amputari excusatio*, &c. *i. e.* How can all excuse be taken away, unless 'he that teacheth, does the same things that he 'teacheth, and conducts, and lends his helping 'hand to him that follows? For if he should be
'sub-

' subject to no Passion, a Man might thus reply
 ' upon his Teacher ; I would not sin, but I am
 ' overcome, being clothed with frail and weak
 ' Flesh: This is it which is angry, which covets,
 ' which grieves, which fears to die. Therefore
 ' I am led unwillingly, and I sin, not because I
 ' would, but because I am forced. I am sensible
 ' likewise that I sin, but the necessity of Humane
 ' Frailty compels, which I cannot withstand.
 ' What shall this Teacher of Righteousness an-
 ' swer to these Things? How will he refuse or
 ' convince that Man who lays the blame of his sins
 ' upon his Flesh, unless he himself be likewise clothed
 ' with Flesh and Blood, that so he may shew that Flesh
 ' it self is likewise capable of the Exercise of Virtue?

Ibid. *That be should be conceived by the Power
 of the Holy Ghost in the Womb of a Virgin, with-
 out the concurrence of Man, is an excellent Provi-
 sion for a higher esteem and Valuation of his Per-
 son.* } That Christ should be Born of a Virgin
 without the Concurrence of Man, could not be
 looked upon as Incredible by the Pagan World,
 who scarce ever had any famous Hero among
 them, but they presently found out some God
 for his Father. And Plutarch in the Life of
 Numa relates, *That the Egyptians supposed it pro-
 bable enough that the Spirit of the Gods has gi-
 ven Original of Generation to Women, and begot-
 ten fruit of their Bodies.* And Lactantius argues
 the Reasonableness of the Nativity of Jesus of
 the Virgin Mary, from what was commonly
 believed among the Heathens concerning other
 Creatures, *Quod si Animalia quædam Vento &*

43.

*Loco supra-
 dicto.*

Aurà concipere solere omnibus notum est, cur quisquam mirum putet, cum Spiritu Dei, cui est facile quicquid velit, gravatam esse Virginem dicimus?

The belief of which when facilitated, will appear an excellent Provision for a higher esteem and valuation of the Person of our Saviour. Therefore perhaps it was not only a drunken humour in *Alexander*, when he would be thought the Son of *Jupiter Hammon*, but to make himself appear more August and Venerable by the Reputation of being the Son of a God. To this purpose it is related by *Huetius* that among the *Turks* there are certain Boys, which they call *εὐνοτοπαῖς*, believed of the common People to be Born of Virgins, and in great esteem, as supposed to do strange things: In the *Turkish* Language they are called *Nephes-Ogli*, i. e. the Sons of Soul. However these Things be, yet this is certain, that among all Nations those Persons have been always had in the greatest esteem and Veneration who have been taken to be the immediate Offspring of God. And this was it which put *Pilate* into such a great Fear, when the *Jews* told him that our Saviour asserted himself to be the Son of God, *Joh. 19. 8.* imagining according to the Opinion of the *Gentiles* that he might be the Son of *Jupiter* or *Apollo*, or some other of their Deities, and consequently that he ought rather to be revered, then given up to be Crucified.

*Demonstr.
Evangel.
P. 385.*

43

Ibid. Adds the greater Majesty to what he should deliver.] From hence it was that most of the Legislators among the Heathen, that they might obtain the greater Credit and Veneration

to

to their Laws, were wont to tell the People they received them from some God or other. As *My-nias* persuaded the *Egyptians* that he was taught his Laws by *Mercury*: *Minos* intituled his to *Jupiter*; and *Zamolxis* among the *Getes* to the Goddess *Vesta*. Now albeit these were but Fictions, yet from the Dictates of common Reason they all concluded thus much, that there was no Law so binding, or that carried greater Majesty and Authority, then that which had Divinity stamped upon it.

Ibid. *Nor could God signify his will more agreeable to the Nature of Man.*] ‘Admirably to this Purpose the forecited *Lactantius* discourses, where shewing how highly Reasonable it was that Christ should take upon him our Flesh, he adds, *Si verò sit Immortalis, exemplum proponere homini nullo modo potest*—— i. e. If he had been wholly Immortal, he could not have offered himself as an Example to Mankind; for some grave Person would be very apt thus to bespeak him; you indeed do not sin, because you are free from this Body; you covet not, because an Immortal Being wants nothing: But I have need of many Things to maintain this life of mine. You are not afraid of Death, because it can have no Dominion over you. You despise Pain, because you are Impassible. But I poor Mortal have reason to fear both, because they bring upon me such grievous Torments as weak and infirm Flesh is not able to endure. Therefore he that is a Teacher of Virtue ought to take away this excuse from men, that none may ascribe his sins rather to Necessity then his own fault And that he

'he may be every way compleat, nothing ought to be
 'objected against him by him that is to be taught :
 'As if any one should say, you command Impos-
 'sibilities, he may readily answer, Behold I do
 'the same things : I am clothed with Flesh, whose
 'Property is to sin, yet I bear about a Mortal Body
 'without sin. I cannot for Righteousness sake ei-
 'ther suffer Pain or Death, because I am frail ;
 'Behold Pain and Death hath Power on me ; and
 'I overcome those things which thou fearest, that
 'I may make thee a Conqueror over Pain and Death.
 'I go first through those things which thou pre-
 'tendest thou canst not bear ; if thou canst not
 'follow me in what I command, yet surely thou
 'mayst follow me going before thee. Thus all
 'manner of excuse is taken away, and every
 'Man must confess that 'tis his own fault that
 'he is Vitious, in neglecting to follow not only
 'the Teacher of all Virtue, but the Guide and
 'Conductor to it.

And if any shall Object with that Impious
 Epicurean, and ask, Why could not God appear,
 and at once take away all wickedness and sin out of
 the Soul, and plant Virtue there ? To this *Origen*
 replies, 1. That it may well be doubted εἰ δύναι-
 τόν ἐστι τῇ φύσει τὸ τοῦτον whether such a thing be
 naturally possible or not. 2. Supposing it be,
 πᾶς ἐν τῷ ἐφ' ἡμῶν, where will be the Liberty of
 our will, and where that laudable Assent to the
 Truth, and Averſation from Lies and Falſhood ?
 For if we take away Liberty and Spontaneity, we
 destroy the very Essence of Virtue. So that no
 Course could have been taken more agreeable
 and

and suitable to the Nature of Man, then what is made choice of in the Christian Religion.

Ibid. *God cannot appear to us but under some corporeal Veil.*] The Essences of all Things and so of Spirits are invisible, and nothing can be the Object of our Senses, but under some Corporeal Modification; therefore the Evangelical Oeconomy requiring not only that the Person who should come from God to instruct the World should be intimately and Hypostatically united with the Divine Nature, to conciliate the Greater Majesty to what he should deliver, but likewise that he should appear to Men in some visible form and shape. Divine Wisdom thought nothing a more sitting Mansion or Covering then a humane Body, partly because an Angelical Body had been impassible, and then that we might not lose that Natural encouragement and Provocation to Virtue flowing from the Example of one made after our own likeness, who by those many endearing Circumstances he might make use of in the Flesh, would more Powerfully captivate and attract Humane Souls to the Love and Obedience of him. And therefore *Ignatius* in his Epistle to the *Ephesians* does justly condemn some Hereticks in his Time, who said that our Saviour Christ τῇ δοκίμῃ γυνῆσθαι ἀνθρώπου, was only a putative Man, ἐν ἀληθείᾳ ἀνελιφέναι σῶμα, and that he did not take unto himself a true and real Body.

Pag. 44. *Who spake very doubtfully of it.*] When *Socrates* had brought as good Arguments for the Immortality of the Soul as he could, yet *Simmius* thought he had Reason to say, that to know any thing clearly of it in this life, was either ἀδύνατον, *In Phædon* ἢ *Platonis*:

παγ-

παγχελέπντι, *Impossible, or a thing extremely difficult.*

But (says he) a Man must choose the best Reasons he can find, which are least liable to Exception; and he must venture to embark himself in these, and Sail by them through this life, εἰ μὴ τις δύνῃ αὐτοῦ ἀσφαλέςτερον ἢ ἀκινδυνότερον ἐπὶ βεβαiores ὁχήματα ἢ λόγος θεὸς τινὸς διαπορευθῆναι. i. e. unless he can be so happy as to be carried safer with less danger, in a surer, stedfast Chariot of some Divine Word, i. e. *Revelation*; which is not only a clear acknowledgment that meer natural Reason is at a loss, but a kind of *Vaticination* of an indubitable certainty, and perfect security of Immortal life to be expected from some Divine Revelation: And accordingly is now put out of all doubt by our Lord and Saviour, who has brought Life and Immortality to light through the Gospel. Nor could that excellent Philosopher *Cicero* speak with greater Confidence, for when he had weighed all things on both Parts, he knew not what to say but this, *Harum igitur Sententiarum, quæ vera sit, Deus aliquis viderit.* i. e. Which of these Opinions is true, God only knows.

Tuscul. Quest.
Lib. I.

46.

Pag. 46. *Since God cannot execute this Solemn Judgment, but under a visible shape.*] That our Lord Jesus should appear at the End of the World in some visible shape and form, and in that pass a Final doom upon all Refractory and Impenitent Sinners, seems highly Rational, there being no other way whereby so effectually and sensibly to convince Atheistical Persons of the Existence of God and his Steady and All-comprehensive Providence in ruling all things. And this seems to be expressed by St. Jude v. 15. 16. in reciting the Prophecy of
of

of *Εἰσοχῆ*, where one End of the Appearance of our Saviour with his Holy Myriads is, for the Conviction of the *ἀμαρτωλοὶ ἀπεβῆς* those wicked sinners who were not contented to act unrighteously but did *καλεῖν ὑπεργρα* speak opprobrious and contemptuous Things of God and all Religion. Nor is this only peculiar to the Terrestrial state of life, for it is probable that many Spirits may be tainted with the same Atheistical conceits in the Aereal Regions, and may resolve all Things there likewise into blind Chance and Fortune. Now when our Lord Jesus, according to the clear Predictions of Sacred Scripture, shall think fit to put an End to the Scene of Affairs in this lower World, and to that Purpose shall visibly descend from Heaven with an Innumerable Company of Mighty Angels, making all those Regions through which they pass bright before them with the glory and lustre of their Celestial Bodies, and in this Posture shall for some time face the Earth, and after that dreadful Sentence pronounced upon wicked Men and the Apostate Spirits of the Air, by his stupendious Power shall excite all the Principles of Fire both in Earth and Air, to perfect a General and Universal Conflagration of this Terrestrial World for the Punishment of the Rebellious Crue; this will be such an amazing and surprizing Testimony and irrefragable Proof of the Immediate Hand of God, as must and will convince the most wretched and deplorable notwithstanding the Courteness and Stubbornness of their Natures, both of his Being and Providence.

Pag. 47. *He who after an Humble, Pious, and Attentive weighing of things, shall yet fall into Er-*

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Error] ' All Error is not alike hurtful and dangerous :
 ' For an Error may be purely and simply Involunta-
 ' ry, or it may be in respect of the cause of it Volun-
 ' tary. If the Cause of it be some Voluntary and avoi-
 ' able Fault, the Error is it self sinful, and consequent-
 ' ly in its own Nature damnable. As if by negligence
 ' in seeking the Truth, by unwillingness to find it,
 ' by Pride, by Obstinacy, by desiring that Religi-
 ' on should be true which sutes best with my Ends,
 ' by fear of Mens ill Opinion, or any other world-
 ' ly Fear or Hope, I betray my self to any Error
 ' contrary to any Divine revealed Truth, that Error
 ' may be justly styled a sin, and Consequently to such
 ' a one of it self damnable. But if I be guilty of
 ' none of these Faults, but be desirous to know the
 ' Truth, & diligent in seeking it, and advise not at all
 ' with Flesh and Blood about the choice of my Opi-
 ' nions, but only with God and that Reason he has
 ' given me, if I be thus qualified, and yet through
 ' humane Infirmitie fall into Error, that Error can-
 ' not be damnable. Thus far a great and learned
 ' Man. I may add, That a sober and serious
 Christian, who endeavours by all means to know
 the will and Mind of God, and so soon as he can
 discover it, is ready sincerely to believe and pra-
 ctise it, and has withal a lively sense of the Honour
 of God, and a hearty Good-will to all Mankind, this
 Person through the Goodness of God shall be kept
 from falling into any dangerous and damnable Er-
 ror. But now when any Man shall carelessly neglect
 to use that Reason which God has given him to dis-
 criminate between Truth and Falshood, and shall
 happen to assent to Truth, not upon a due choice
 and discernment between it and Falshood, but
 blindly

blindly and fortuitously, this Assent is no way commendable, and an Involuntary Error after a clear and well qualified Search is to be preferred before it.

I have now finished my *Annotations* upon this Excellent Discourse, in which I have endeavoured to illustrate and confirm such Things, as our Reverend Author has but lightly touched, at least could not largely insist upon in that concise way of a Sermon. And this I have the more readily performed, because I judged a Discourse of this Nature by a Person of so extraordinary Piety, such clear Intellectuals, and so every way accomplished as our Author was, could not prove unacceptable to any of the Lovers of Truth and Ingenuity; and likewise that I might do Honour to his Venerable Name and Memory from whom I had the Happiness of receiving the first Rudiments of Academical Learning. This I affirm moreover (with an Humble Deference to better and more enlightened Judgments) that such an Explication of Religion as our Reverend and Learned Author drives at, is the most likely way not only to silence the bold Cavils of Enthusiasts and Atheists, but to eradicate all carnal and sensual Doctrines and Opinions, and to bring on through the Assistance of the Mighty Spirit of God (whose presence is never wanting to the sincerely Conscientious) that Blessed and desirable State of the Church, the *Philadelphian* interval, which our Lord and Saviour will all along fill with Glorious Manifestations of his Power and Providence.

F I N I S.

Excellent Discourse, in which I have endeavored to illustrate and confirm both These as well as the former, and has been received at the
I have now finished my Lecture upon this
and well planned tract is now before the public.
commenced at an Inauguration Exercise a few
days ago, and I sincerely trust it is no way

THe Folios of the Sentences Commented on in the Annotations being most of them not altered from what they were in the Manuscript, for prevention of confusion in the Reader, they are to be mended thus: The first in Pag. 48. has p. 4. 5. in stead of p. 26. The rest are to be thus in order as they go on in the Book, p. 27. p. 30. p. 33. p. 34. p. 35. p. 36. p. 38. p. 39. p. 40. p. 41.

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